



THE ULTIMATE

# *Beginner's Guide to Social Media*

FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

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A Comprehensive, Jargon-Free Guide to  
Social Media Marketing For Those Who  
Just Don't 'Get it'!



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## INTRODUCTION

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This beginner's guide is designed to show you how to effectively use social media for your business. It will help you to develop and maintain a social media presence that engages your audience, builds your brand awareness and drives new business. Whether you are just starting out or need to refocus your existing efforts, this is your go-to resource for tips and advice on how to approach and tackle social media for your business covering everything from summaries of the major platforms, how to build a following, to how to measure your success and much more.

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## WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA?

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Social media is the means by which people interact with others in virtual communities and networks allowing them to create, share and exchange information and ideas. With the rapid popularity growth of these new technologies, social media has had a profound impact on the way people discover, read and share news, information and content. Social media encompasses all forms of 'user generated' content, from communication platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to multimedia services such as YouTube and virtual gaming platforms like World of Warcraft. It has become extremely popular as it allows people to connect and form relationships in the online world for personal and business use.

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## HOW IS SOCIAL MEDIA BEING USED BY BUSINESSES?

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Social media puts you out there and showcases your business directly to your target audience's screen! As such, the benefits of creating a social presence on the web have been felt by every type of business and industry. Whether you have a restaurant, retail outlet or provide professional services, social media enables you to build your online reputation, increase credibility and help generate business and drive sales. By taking advantage of social media, you can make your business gain more exposure, be more personable and generate and maintain long term connections as well as benefit from rich insights into your customers and industry. All of which can greatly benefit your business in the future.

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## WHY SHOULD YOU JOIN IN?

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With the surge in popularity in having a presence on social media, the chances are that your customers and competitors are already involved. On the web your customers will be talking, forming their opinions and where they are making their own recommendations to their friends and connections. Likewise, your competitors may be already channelling in on those customers and reaping the rewards from engaging with, joining and listening to those conversations. People all around the world may be already talking about your business, so it is important that you get involved in the conversation and present yourself how you want to be presented on the web. Still not convinced? Here are 5 more reasons why you need social media for your business!

### ***Social Media is Everywhere and Very Popular***

Social media has become a central part of most people's lives, whether they are at home or on the go, people are actively engaging online. These users are not just sharing updates from their own lives; they are searching for businesses, products, services and connecting with brands through their social channels. People of all ages and genders are actively using social media so no matter how old or young, or what gender your target audience may be, chances are most of them are already logging on and waiting for you to get started.

### ***Social Media Sites are Free***

Getting started on most social media platforms is completely free. Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, WordPress and LinkedIn all offer free accounts to users and businesses and in most cases signing up won't require anything more than an email address. There are features within some platforms that you need to pay for such as a Facebook Ad or a profile upgrade in LinkedIn, but for the purposes of getting started there's no upfront cost for most of the social networks.

### ***Join an Existing Conversation***

Social media provides you with an opportunity to listen to the conversations about your business and industry being openly discussed online. Not only does joining this conversation mean you can hear what is being said about you, it also means you can easily develop a richer understanding of your customers and benefit from insights into your target audiences. It can also be used to create dedicated communities where you can host discussions about the products and services you offer or use your followers as an outlet for helping build new ones.



### ***Social Media is Great for Customer Service***

Customer service through social media is quickly becoming an expectation of consumers. Businesses have quickly come to realise that it offers a unique opportunity to showcase your customer service skills, promote more intimate business relationships with your customers and enables you to cater to your customers' needs instantly. In a world where everything is fast paced, a quick response that shows how much you care about providing a memorable experience can create a lifelong customer. Social media allows you to continually strengthen relationships with these customers through social engagement and because this engagement is publicly visible to others, it can introduce your business to a whole new audience and enable you to reach your next customer.

### ***It Helps People Learn More About Your Business***

Social media sites are becoming the go-to place for consumers who want to learn more about a business. People are online actively searching for information about anything from product reviews to informative articles and general entertainment, so it is up to you to utilise this and use your social media presence to provide valuable, informative and entertaining news and updates to existing and potential audiences. If customers are already searching for you on Facebook or Twitter and not finding your business, you are missing opportunities to win new customers and inform and engage your existing ones, so it is vital that you join in with social media and have your brand heard and seen online.

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# THE ULTIMATE CHECKLIST FOR YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING PLAN

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***'If you fail to prepare, prepare to fail.'***

Whilst Benjamin Franklin was not speaking to the owner of a local cupcake company looking to start a Facebook page when he said those words, they still ring true when it comes to a business starting out on social media. Just as you would not set up a business without a business plan, you cannot just jump straight into social media, start aimlessly posting and expect the customers to come rolling in. Rather, you must sit down, grab a cup of coffee and develop a clear social media strategy. While there's no one-size fits all solution, you can find social media success if you are armed with the right questions to get you started. After all, a plan equals focus, and focus is what is going to drive your business forward online.

## ***What Objectives Do I Want my Business to Achieve by Using Social Media?***

Whether you want to use your social media presence to gain exposure for your brand, directly educate and interact with your customers, promote specific products and services or all of the above, clearly identifying your objectives is the critical first step towards a successful social media presence. Identifying your objectives in the beginning is critical for all elements of your social media marketing. It allows you to effectively tailor your content and posting schedule, provide value to your customers, right through to helping you accurately measure your success as you will be aware of the most appropriate metrics to track efficiently.

## ***Common Social Media Objectives***

- Build Brand Awareness
- Drive Traffic to Website
- Provide Customer Service
- Engage with Fans
- Establish Thought Leadership
- Launch New Products or Services
- Generate Leads and Increase Sales
- Research and Insights
- Build Your Community
- Improve SEO
- Competitive Analysis

### ***What is the State of My Current Social Media Use?***

If you are already present on social media, you need to take a good hard look at your content from the eyes of a new (or potential) fan or follower. There is a whole host of important questions you need to ask yourself when you look through your online presence. Here are a few taken from the checklist I use when I conduct a Social Media Audit.

- **Assess their presence:** has it been thought through? Profile/cover photo/about section completed, effective and branded?
- **Can potential followers immediately get a sense of company culture,** products and services on offer?
- **Content:** How does their content support their strategy? What content receives the most clicks, likes and shares? Are they sharing engaging content? Do they encourage engagement? Offer something valuable/useful? How often is it updated? Are they engaging back with fans? Do they use hashtags effectively? How do they use images to tell the company story?
- **How are the individual platforms being used to drive traffic to the main web presence?** Is it clear what the next step is that they want fans/followers to take? Call to actions in tweets/pins/posts?
- Record **numbers of followers and following:** are they both relevant and targeted audience?
- When the last time was their Twitter / Facebook/Pinterest etc. presence was **updated**?
- What **feedback** do they get from followers?

### ***Who are My Target Audience?***

Determining the audience that you want to reach and engage with on social media is fundamental to your strategy. Whether your target audience is your current or potential clients or customers, affiliate businesses, thought leaders or all four, your aim is to create a successful social media strategy that matches and is tailored towards understanding and acting on your target audiences' behaviours online. Creating Buyer Personas helps you define and target the right people, in the right places, at the right times with the right messages. When you learn important factors about your target audience from their age, job status, income, interests, problems, to their likes, dislikes, motivations, where they spend their time online and in what format they like to digest their content online then it becomes easier to target them on social media. The key is to remember that the more specific you are the more successful and targeted you are going to be with your social media strategy that will bring real results and conversions for your business.

### ***What Platforms am I Going to use for my Business?***

What platforms you choose to use will ultimately depend on where your customers are, and which ones are best suited for your business. Spend the time researching where your current customers are online and what platforms can be best utilised with your resources and business. The key is to not spread yourself too thinly across lots of social media platforms just because you think this will gain you

business more exposure, rather it is much more effective to run a handful of platforms consistently and efficiently and to spend the time reviewing the platforms you are on to make sure they are as effective as they can be. You should also keep up to date with research into new technologies and platforms that your business could potentially utilise in the future.

### ***Selecting the Right Social Media Platforms for Your Business***

Each social media platform is unique, with its own best practices, style and audience. The key to choosing the right social media platforms relies on you having a clear understanding of your objectives for social media, your target audience and what resources/ information you have available to share. Simply put, choose the ones that best fit your strategy and the goals you want to achieve on social media. You do not have to be on them all — just the ones that matter to you and your audience.

To help you decide the best platform, ultimately ask yourself these questions.

- **Purpose** – What information do you want to share with and communicate to your audience?
- **Format** – In what format is the best way to present this information? Videos, Podcasts, extended pieces of writing etc.
- **Platform** – Which social media platform will allow me to share this message best and which platform has the correct audience that I want to reach?
- **Time** – How much time can I devote to a social network? Aim for at least an hour per day per social network. Once you get going, tools like Hootsuite can help you effectively manage your time.
- **Resources** – What personnel and skills do you have to work with? Visual social platforms like Pinterest and Instagram require good quality images. Social platforms like blogging emphasize quality content. Do you have the resources to create what is needed?
- **Audience** – Where do your potential customers hang out? Which social network has the right demographics for you?

### ***Have I Done my Research?***

A successful social media presence is always aided by a good, solid foundation of prior research. You should look to do initial research into key areas such as your competitor's social media, your target audience demographics, the latest trends and news in social media, marketing and business as well as many others. Conducting research and paying attention to changes in your industry and audience for example should also be a regular and active occurrence as things, especially social media, evolve and change so you need to keep up to date to ensure your strategy is as relevant and effective as possible.

- **Market Research** – Who is your target audience? How do they behave on social media? Where are they online?
- **Competitors** – Which platforms are your competitors using? Are they directly engaging with prospects online? What are they good at online? In which areas could they improve? Can you get case studies? (Both successful and unsuccessful examples)

- **Latest Business and Social Media News, Trends and Techniques** – Do you know the latest techniques on your social media platforms that are effective? What is changing in social media and/or business that could affect your marketing?

### ***Am I Clear on My Marketing Voice and Tone?***

The temptation at this point might be to jump right in and start sharing content. Before you do however, it is crucial to create a voice and tone of your marketing that effectively encompasses your brand.

***To help you with this, start with questions like these:***

- If your brand were a person, what kind of personality would it have?
- If your brand was a person, what is their relationship to the consumer? (A trainer, friend, family member etc.)
- What do you want your customers to think about your company?
- Describe what your company's personality is not
- Are there any companies that have a similar personality to yours? Why are they similar?

### ***Who is Going to set up and Maintain my Businesses Social Media Platforms?***

In the beginning you will need to decide who will implement and maintain your social media accounts. Whether you want to run them in-house or hire a social-media marketing manager or agency, you need to ensure that the person who oversees your platforms can effectively represent your brand and has the know-how to create and maintain a successful social media presence. That person is going to ultimately control how your business is presented to others in the online world, so you need to be confident that they are the right person for you and your business.

### ***Have I Chosen My Core Topics?***

The key to a successful content strategy is finding the core topics you want your business to be known for and the topics that attract and keep the attention of fans and followers. What topics or categories best represent your company? For most this is a combination of three areas,

- **Your Passion** - the topic you are passionate and love to talk about
- **Your Assets** - the topic you are known for and skilled and trained in
- **Market Reality** - is there a demand on social media for the type of content you are offering?

### ***What Resources/ Content do I Have at my Disposal?***

Each social media platform has a certain type of content that is best suited towards it, for example Pinterest is inherently visual and therefore requires good-quality and memorable images to be effective. You need to understand what type of content that the platforms you are using is most effective and importantly what content resonates best with your audience. Once you are clear on both these aspects,



you will be able to form an effective content strategy that will give you maximum impact. It is important that you share with your audience a diverse and interesting mix of content types that encourages engagement so you need to think about the types of questions you will ask, updates you will share and what resources you have that you can utilise and repurpose for your social media platforms.

### ***What Should I be Posting?***

A quick glance through any social media article, research and blog post will show an emphasis and push towards sharing visual content. This trend towards the visual has plenty of anecdotal evidence too, with it being a widely known fact that image posts get more views, clicks, re-shares, and likes than any other type of post. On Facebook, photos get 53% more likes, 104% more comments and 84% more click-throughs on links than text-based posts. Similarly, for Twitter, in a study of over two million tweets from verified users across a number of different industries, Twitter found that photos have the greatest effect on retweets. Photos average a 35% boost in Retweets with Videos getting a 28% boost. What does this mean for your business? Simple. You must prioritise producing good quality visuals in your social media content strategy.

So now we have established that you need to incorporate the visual into your content strategy. It is time to take a look at what elements should make up your other content. There are hundreds of rules, strategies and theories on the best and most effective ways to structure your content, the most used and most simple but effective strategy I have found is the 70:20:10 rule.

### ***The 70:20:10 rule***

As a general rule of thumb, the rule states.

- 70% of posts should add value and be brand and business building, stuff that your followers will find interesting, valuable and insightful and that supports who you are as a business.
- 20% should share ideas or content from other sources e.g. blogs, digital PR, websites, other social media channels etc.
- 10% should be self- promotional - your offers, discounts, marketing and promotional, sales etc.

### ***21 Quick-Fire Example Content Ideas***

- **Business Tips:** People love to hear valuable business tips.
- **Humour/Relatable:** Whether it is a funny meme or something funny that has happened in your life or your business, share it.
- **Inspiration/Motivation:** Inspiration is the number one most shared type of content across every social media platform.
- **Open-Ended Questions:** People love to talk, and they love to answer questions.
- **Offers and Deals:** Did you know that getting deals is still the number one reason that people like brands on Facebook? We all love a good deal.

- **Behind the Scenes/Sneak Peeks:** People love to feel like they are a part of what's happening in your business.
- **Opinions:** You can give yours and/or simply ask for theirs. People love to give their feedback and feel like their voice is being heard.
- **Industry News:** There is a huge value proposition in this. Firstly, you are educating your community on things that are happening in your space or in your niche. Secondly, doing this routinely will help you become an industry news or thought leader.
- **Fill in the Blanks:** It is an alternative way to phrase a question and the best ones only require a one or two-word answer, which makes it easier for your fans and followers to answer and engage with.
- **Strike Up a Conversation:** Take the time to strike up a conversation. It is a great way to build relationships.
- **Testimonials:** Let people know that other people value your services or your products.
- **Open Q&A's:** Are a great way to provide value and get some real-time engagement with your followers.
- **Polls:** You can use a poll for several different things like collecting opinions and/or ideas. Polls are a great engagement tool but are also a great way to get information.
- **Caption a Photo:** Asking your fans and followers to caption a photo normally elicits good engagement.
- **Make Predictions:** People love predictions. They want to know what you think.
- **Crowd Source Ideas:** Ask other people for ideas. Whether you are getting ready to do a new product or anything of that nature...ask!
- **Highlight Your Customers:** Let your social media followers know that you value them. It is important.
- **Tech Tips or Tools:** People love tools and they love tech tips.
- **Advice:** If you have some great advice and you feel like its valuable then share it.
- **Share Video or Audio Clips:** In some cases, video and audio posts are more impactful than a simple text based or image post.
- **ASK:** Ask your followers what content they want to see.

### ***What is my Publishing Schedule?***

Whilst it is wonderfully easy for you to be told from a social media expert that you should post 2 Facebook posts a day, 10 Tweets and 2 Blog posts a month for example, the ironclad and definitive answer to the questions 'What, When and How often should I post?' is simple: It depends. Everything about the social media experience is about your individual audience and niche. What works for you might not work for me... the important thing is that you experiment and learn what does work for you.

***Your publishing schedule is going to be ultimately dictated by three things, your business capabilities, the platform you are using, and your audience needs.*** In the beginning you will need to experiment to find a publishing schedule that works best for your business, goals and readers and is the perfect balance of what you want and what your audience wants. Part of this consideration is also understanding the nature of the platform you're using to publish and whether it is one such as Twitter that favours several

short updates per day or Facebook where posting 5+ times a week is effective. Ultimately, when you are creating a publishing schedule you need to ask yourself, can you keep this schedule consistently? Can you always publish high-quality content at this rate? And will you have enough content for this schedule? Once you've discovered the most effective schedule for you, being consistent with your publishing schedule has the benefit of increasing SEO value, maximising value and engagement from readers and encourages readers to come back regularly for more.

### ***How Often Should you be Posting?***

As you have come to realise, everything about a business social media experience is unique to you. There is no one size fits all approach to what content to post, just like there is not one for about how often to post to social media either. Some of the factors that will impact your specific sharing frequency may include your industry, your reach, your resources, the quality of your updates and the social network you are using. The best way to discover the ideal posting frequency is by looking at your own analytics and several tools available in the market, these are a great way to show you the best time of day to post on your social media platforms, how often and even when your audience is online. So, what are you to do if you are just starting out on these social networks, with no audience and no history? This is where best practices come in. As a good example, SumAll, which compiled timing research from sites like Visual.ly, Search Engine Watch, and Social Media Today has created a guide to what their extensive research found in terms of timing.

- **Twitter** – 1-3pm weekdays
- **Facebook** – 1-4pm and 2-5pm weekdays
- **LinkedIn** – 7-8:30am and 5-6pm Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday
- **Instagram** – 5-6pm weekdays and 8pm on Mondays with a sweet spot at 6pm
- **Pinterest:** 2-4pm and 8-11pm weekdays with weekends being the best

### ***How am I Going to Ensure my Business Branding is Representative and Consistent?***

Having a social media presence is a great way to show a wider audience who you are, what you stand for and ultimately why they should love you. It is important that you know clearly what your brand stands for and how this is going to be conveyed consistently and accurately across your platforms. This consideration needs to be applied to everything from the voice you want for your brand that can be consistently applied across all your posts to the creative aspects of your platforms- that is the overall presentation including the colour scheme and typography. By setting consistent guidelines over the presentation and integration of your branding into your social media platforms it ensures that all these factors support and are in line with your overall branding and help reinforce your message and brand.

### ***Am I Going to Have to Create a Written Social Media Policy for my Employees?***

If there are going to be several different administrators of your platforms or you run a business with staff members who have personal and/or business social media accounts, it is well worth creating a social media policy for your staff to sign so everyone is clear on their responsibilities and what is deemed appropriate and inappropriate behaviour when they are representing or discussing your business online.

### ***Have I Considered My Mobile Strategy?***

With ever increasing numbers of people accessing the internet and social media platforms from their mobile devices, it is vital that you optimise your profiles for mobile users and give them a mobile friendly experience. You should test and experiment with your platforms to see how they look on both your desktop and a variety of other mobile devices to ensure you provide a seamless experience for those visiting your social media platforms no matter what device they are viewing them from. When assessing your site from different devices, you should check for several key areas such as do your images remain high quality? Are the social media sharing buttons clearly positioned and working properly? If text is used, it is readable on a small screen? The time you spend to perfect your platforms from your desktop should also be spent on making your site work for mobile too, if you fail to do so then you could lose traffic and sales as you will not be providing all users with a good experience.

### ***How am I Going to Measure the Success of my Social Media Marketing Efforts?***

Tracking your social-media marketing metrics is a fundamental part of the social media marketing process as it helps gauge which tactics are successful and which areas need improvement. Put a plan in place that allows you to track, measure and assess your results consistently to see what content/strategies resonates best and to ensure you are successfully meeting your social media objectives and if they are still relevant to you. Adjust your strategy and your content when appropriate to keep your social media content fresh and your information topical. The more you post, the more you will discover which content, timing, and frequency is right for you.

### ***Ultimately, Have I got a Clear Strategy?***

Having a clear idea on every aspect of your social media marketing strategy is key to its success. Ultimately, you should easily be able to answer confidently and with clarity the below questions that form a basic social media marketing strategy. Part of maintaining a strong, successful presence is also to regularly assess whether certain aspects of your original strategy have changed (For example are your objectives still the same? Is there a new social media platform that your audience is using?) and then adjust your efforts accordingly. As you become a regular participant on social media you will find ways in which you need to improve certain areas and areas in which you excel in, so never stop learning and listening to what your audience and your analytics tell you.

**Keep referring back to this handy checklist;**

### ***Setting Goals***

- ✓ Why have I joined social media?
- ✓ What is my brand's overall purpose?
- ✓ What does my business aim to achieve with social media?

### ***Audience***

- ✓ Who is our target audience?
- ✓ Which social networks do they use?
- ✓ What topics and sources of information are most important to them?
  - ✓ What problems can I help them solve?
  - ✓ What jobs can I help them complete?

### ***My Brand***

- ✓ What is my brand voice?
- ✓ What is the overall tone of my social media updates?
- ✓ What emotions do I hope to convey through my brand's messaging?

### ***Content***

- ✓ What types of content should I post on which social platforms?
- ✓ What type of content best supports my content marketing aims?
- ✓ What are the main topics, categories or messages that support my brand?
  - ✓ Should I use social media to provide customer service?

### ***Content Creation***

- ✓ What realistic resources do we have?
- ✓ Who should set up and maintain my social media accounts?
- ✓ What is the workflow from content creation to publication?
- ✓ How often should I post new content on my social networks?
  - ✓ How does social media fit with our other campaigns?

### ***Measuring Success***

- ✓ How will I measure ROI and define success with my social media strategy?
  - ✓ What is working with my social media marketing efforts?
  - ✓ What is the customer journey from search to purchase?
    - ✓ Where does social media fit within my funnel?



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## 24 BEST PRACTICES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING SUCCESS

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Want to ensure your social media presence is ultimately going to be a successful addition to your marketing strategy? Take note of these 24 best practices!

### ***Have Goals and Objectives***

Like every other marketing and business initiative, you need to have a goal or objective that you want your social media presence to achieve. Whether you want to use it to improve brand awareness or as a new outlet to interact with customers, having clear objectives for your platforms helps to optimise their reach and impact. Having well-defined objectives also makes it clearer for you in what to measure for your return on investment. It is also worth noting that return on investment with social media marketing cannot always be measured in money. Whilst it can drive sales, the real power of social media marketing is in building relationships with customers. Whatever your objectives, make them achievable and relevant for your business and remember as you progress these objectives may change.

### ***Portray Yourself Consistently***

It is important that before you engage in social media that you are clear on what kind of image you want to portray of yourself and make sure to keep it consistent across all platforms. This consistency equally applies not just to the 'voice' you portray but also to the creative aspects, such as the fonts and colour schemes you use in your social media graphics. If your brand uses certain colours, then be sure to apply these consistently across the presentation of all your social media platforms. This also extends to a company logo or picture, make sure they are up to date and reflective of the image you want to portray. It is also important to have an idea of what voice you want for your page that can be consistently applied across all your posts, especially if your company page is going to be managed by several different contributors. Ask yourself are you funny? Are you bold? Are you a protagonist? In general, avoid generic corporate speak and replace it with your own unique voice and customers will be more drawn to and engage with you.

### ***Be Where Your Customers Are***

It is important to have a presence where your customers are looking to interact with you. To find out where you should be there are two easy ways; research the demographics of your intended social media platforms and ask your customers yourself. When you start researching what platforms you think are best for your business, be sure that their main audience are the ones you want to target. The other option is for you to ask your existing customers where they are active online; this will then help guide your platform choices.

### ***Get in The Habit Of Checking The News***

If you are not already doing this at least once a day, you need to start. Get in the habit of checking both industry news and the news in the world. You do not need to read an entire newspaper and several journals, just look to bookmark a few key sites and blogs and at the very least, skim the headlines. Social media covers all aspects of people's lives and the more you understand about them in a wider context, the more you can understand where your brand will fit into your follower's newsfeed. The added benefit of scanning the news daily means it will also help you to find real time opportunities that you can utilise for your social media content.

### ***Learn to Manage Your Time Effectively***

On average, 64% of marketers spend at least 6 hours a week on social media. As more social media platforms, tools and features are added into your marketing mix regularly, it can become overwhelming to keep on top of your timing and not to have your social media management impact your other duties. Timekeeping is one of the most vital skills for an efficient social media marketer, so make sure you are getting everything done by creating checklists for regular tasks and using social media tools that help you work smarter.

### ***Focus on Building a Community Rather Than a Number of Followers***

The number of people following you can only take you so far. Having 10,000+ followers is noteworthy, but at the end of the day it does not matter how many followers you have if they are not interacting and paying attention to your content. So, what can be done to build a community and increase engagement with your current and potential followers? Simple, always insert some personality, humor, and life into your brand and always converse directly with your followers: which is as simple as having a conversation with them, retweet them, like and comment on their posts, and directly ask them to interact with your content.

### ***Create a Powerful Presence Across all Social Channels***

If you want your audience to stay engaged, you need to be engaging. One of the great ways to do this by creating powerful social campaigns that run consistent across all your social platforms. How do you do this? Start by...

- **Telling a powerful story:** Think of ways you can use your social channels to tell powerful, motivational and therefore compelling stories to your viewers. For example, you can share a story rooted in charity work that you do or support. Alternatively, you could share stories from your happiest clients on your blog and then create a social campaign with a unique slogan and hashtag to promote and create a movement around their stories. Team this strategy with...

- **Brand your movement with a unique name and hashtags:** Branding your movement will make it memorable and stick out in the mind of your followers. Take time to brainstorm actionable ideas that will get followers involved, whether that is done by posting photos and using your hashtag to group them, running a contest, or throwing events run by your business. For example, you could use the inspirational aspect of getting fit, or New Year's resolutions, or whichever angle you believe your customers would gravitate towards. Test out a few hashtags, find the one that resonates best, and brand your movement by announcing it on your blog and social platforms.

### ***Suck Up to Influencers***

The goal is to get these influential people to like you and like your brand. Once you get in with the people that matter, your business will exponentially grow because you are exposed to their audience and authority. Make a thorough list of key industry influencers and actively take the following steps to socially connect with them:

- **Favorite, like, comment, and re-share their content:** Do not favorite/like everything they post however, that is too obvious. Try to like and favourite a few times per week and comment when you genuinely have something educational and valuable to say.
- **Tweet at them:** Whether it is asking their feedback on your content or asking industry related questions, this strategy works very well as they will be flattered that you thought of them and consider them to be a valuable resource/influencer.
- **Use the same hashtags:** This way when they are reviewing their hashtag feeds, they will see your content, and perhaps spark their interest.

### ***Share Trending Content***

Your platforms do not exist to be solely self-promotional; this strategy will only make you appear boring and obnoxious. Rather, you need to strike a balance between sharing promotional content that markets your brand, interacting with your followers and influencers, and sharing other useful and entertaining content and news from other valuable resources. To help you become an industry influencer and produce content that is share-worthy, follow these four tips:

- **Look for viral videos** on YouTube of hilarious children, adorable animals, and inspirational moments and re-share with your own unique spin.
- **Scan the news** for the highest covered media stories and add a unique perspective keeping relevant to your brand.
- **Follow and use relevant trending hashtags** to add your voice to the larger conversations happening on social media. For example, on Twitter you can see "Trending."
- **Use a popular tool** like Buzzsumo to find content that resonates. It is the easiest way to search related industry news sites and blogs, keywords, influencers, etc. to find the content with the highest number of social shares. Study the headlines that were shared and re-share those

articles/headlines with your followers. This will continue the train of sharing, but also show your followers that your social posts are intriguing and follow-worthy.

### ***Focus on Creating Content That People Care About and Inspires Conversation***

On social media, you cannot depend on passive followers to convert themselves. You need to create as many opportunities to engage people as possible, and it all begins with your content. As people spend longer on social networks, their community expands and with every person followed, page liked, or friend added, they have a whole new set of posts and stories vying for their attention. Brands who have little respect for what people want in their newsfeed will find themselves further fenced off than before, therefore it is vital that the content you share is what your prospects and former customers generally respond well too. This may be a video about how your products work, interesting insights about the culture of your company or shocking stats about inefficiency in your industry for example. Whatever the case may be, build social content that gets your prospects talking to you.

### ***Utilise Every Opportunity to Make Social Media Content***

Every piece of content that you post is part of your story that you share with your audience. Everything from your ups and downs, your proudest achievements, to your charity work and the people behind your business are all prime areas with which you can create content that you can share with your audience. So whenever you launch a new product, attend a conference or find a new way to use one of your products for example, look at the ways in which you can squeeze content out of it for use on your social media platforms.

### ***Promote your Platforms***

Anywhere your customers interact with your brand is an opportunity to encourage them to engage with you online. Once you begin, remember to promote all your social media platforms and that includes mentioning them on your e-newsletter, your email signature, business card, product packaging and anywhere else your customers will see it. Your customers and fans need to be told where they can connect with you through social media, so make it clear where you are.

### ***Make Providing Value a Top Priority***

Social media is centred on having conversations and engaging with people. That being said, unless the aim of your platforms is to be akin to a personal journal, the content you post should not be simply an update of what you are thinking or doing with no real substance or value in what you are writing. To avoid making this mistake every post and tweet should have a clearly defined topic as well as delivering something valuable to the reader, whether that be entertainment or information. You must also write your content with your target audience in mind so rather than trying to appeal to a generic wider audience, write content that contains specialised information that those interested in your services or in

your sector would read. By openly giving out valued advice and information you will become an online repository of specialist knowledge and this will attract the attention of your target audience. Central to being effective is also realising that conversation is a two-way process, so you also need to listen to what people are saying to you and about you and respond to them accordingly.

### ***Be Active and Consistent***

To get the most out of using social media as a marketing tool, you need to post content often. It is therefore vital that in the very beginning you figure out a comfortable writing routine that works with your editorial calendar, be it posting daily or several times a week, and stick to it in order to maintain consistency and maximise your impact. Although it takes some experimentation to find the best publishing schedule for you, there are two things that should always be considered and will dictate your posting schedule; your business goals and what your audience wants.

### ***Respond Quickly***

The fact that customer service through social media is quickly becoming an expectation of consumers means you are open to both criticism and praise online. From this, it is vital that you watch for any negative things that are being said about you and respond quickly and accordingly. Rather than simply deleting any negative comments you receive, as even the most universally loved businesses receive negative comments, view them as an opportunity to win over a customer offering help, guidance or even acknowledging where something went wrong. By dealing with negativity in an open and authentic way you can help build rapport and trust with your customers. Also remember that often you will get praise online in the form of a great review or comment, do not forget to say thank you.

### ***Coordinate Your Social Channels***

Your success will be limited if you treat each social media platform as a stand-alone effort. Your networks should work together to help you achieve your goals, with your website acting as your brand's home base. Coordinate and cross-promote your social media efforts to reach new audiences, boost your following and to push people to your website where they can buy your product or service.

### ***Boost Results with Social Advertising***

If you want to accelerate your social media performance, it is worth your time to explore paid advertising options. Facebook offers several advertising options to help boost sales, brand exposure, audience engagement and website traffic. Twitter has two advertising solutions: promoted content that helps you cut through the noise and serve your content to tailored audiences and promoted accounts which help increase the size of your Twitter following. Likewise, LinkedIn also offers opportunities to reach specific audiences by advertising or using the sponsored updates feature to increase your brand's visibility. Even



if your budget is limited, do not dismiss social advertising. Used strategically it can produce great results to boost your visibility and success on social media.

### ***Find Leads Using Social Media Monitoring Tools***

Tracking and monitoring conversations happening around your brand and products is a time consuming but vital task that can be made manageable using social media monitoring tools. Ensure you actively make the effort to monitor mentions of your name, your business name, your products and any other keywords related to your business to find conversations already happening in your industry. Jump into those conversations and provide answers, guidance or helpful information where needed. Being useful is one way to start to build relationships with your target market.

### ***Participate in Other People's Communities (OPC's)***

Actively join and engage with the discussions in the communities populated by people likely to use your services and share some of your expertise when it is relevant. Make it your aim to become a trusted member of these communities. You never want to be promotional in social groups, but if you are consistently helpful and engaged, prospects will likely be interested and click through to your profile where they will find your posts, hopefully connect with you and so the 'relationship' begins.

### ***Send Regular Emails with Valuable Content, Deals and Promotions***

As your social media connections move into your email list, you can and should continue to provide valuable information, notify them of upcoming deals and promotions and provide general interesting business news and updates. At this point in the funnel you have likely already become a trusted source of information, meaning your subscribers are warmed up to buying from you. Social media is all about building connections with your target market and making yourself the first name that comes to mind when they are ready to buy. Take this opportunity to craft perfect email campaigns, using segmentation whenever possible and the strategic use of strong calls to action in your emails to make sure your subscribers know what you want them to do, and what to expect when they click on your offer/content. By continuing to cultivate them with engaging, valuable and entertaining information in your emails, you will help to build connections that will result in long-term, profitable relationships.

### ***Create Customer Advocacy Opportunities***

Customer advocacy is where your marketing ROI can take off. You will be putting in less effort to reach your marketing goals because your customers will effectively sell for you.

- **Continue to engage qualified leads and customers**

There is no reason why people should stop learning from you after they become customers. If they are on an email list or subscribed to your blog, actively send out informational reminders for them to connect with your business on social networks.

- **Offer occasional incentives for customers to review your services or share certain posts**  
Depending on your business and market, offering vouchers or bargains such as free consultations can work well. The benefits for you are twofold: You will increase brand exposure and subtly help customers become your advocates.
- **Engage customers specifically about your products and services**  
If your company offers a complex product, it might be a good idea to create a forum on your website that is purely for continued customer support, just for you and your customers to interact around your products. Externally, LinkedIn showcase pages and Facebook groups might be possible hubs for product-based conversations that build increased trust for your brand and position your business as worth advocating for.
- **Provide substantial advocacy opportunities for repeat customers**  
Over time, you might form mutually beneficial partnerships with repeat customers. Consider rewarding these relationships with more substantial opportunities such as inviting them to networking events.

### ***Monitor Social for Un-Tagged Brand Mentions***

Not every person who mentions your brand or products on social media will tag you in the post. In fact, many social posters may assume that you will never even see the posts they create mentioning you. Actively scan your social media networks for these types of mentions and join the conversation by providing pleasantly surprising customer engagement. You should look to actively monitor;

**Your Own Brand Terms:** make sure to monitor for all variations of your business name, including nicknames and common misspellings.

**Your Own Product Terms:** Monitor social for some of your popular products, as well as the common nicknames and misspellings.

### ***Create an Internal FAQ Document***

Consult with everyone who manages your social pages and build a document that houses all FAQ from your customers/ website visitors and some solid answers. Whilst you should never simply copy-paste those responses over to your customers, you can use this document to quickly guide your response. It is a great time saver!

### ***Do What Is Right for You***

As you become a regular participant on social media platforms, you will find unique ways in which they can be used to the best advantage for your business. Nobody knows your customers and what they expect from you better than you yourself so delivering the content they want and engaging with them is the most important thing and will dictate your decisions surrounding your social media marketing efforts. As with any other marketing efforts, you will learn in time what works and what does not, the important thing is to learn by doing.

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# IMPORTANT INTERNET USAGE AND SOCIAL MEDIA STATISTICS

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## Internet

- In 2017, 90% of households in Great Britain had internet access, an increase from 89% in 2016 and 57% in 2006 (ONS, 2017).
- In terms of access, 73% of adults accessed the internet “on the go” using a mobile phone or smartphone, more than double the 2011 rate of 36% (ONS, 2017).
- In terms of purchases, 77% of adults bought goods or services online, up from 53% in 2008 (ONS, 2017).
- Clothes or sports goods were purchased by 56% of adults, making these the most popular online purchase in 2017 (ONS, 2017).
- In 2017, 93% of adults who had bought online in the last 12 months, had done so from online sellers in the UK, while 31% had bought from sellers in other EU countries and 31% had bought from the rest of the world (ONS, 2017).
- On average, Google gets over 100 billion searches a month. Additionally, more than half of those searches are coming from mobile devices.

## Social Media

- The power of social networking is such that, the number of worldwide users is expected to reach some 2.95 billion by 2020, around a third of Earth’s entire population.
- Facebook is the first social network having surpassed the 1 billion monthly active user mark and as of the first quarter of 2017, has more than 1.94 billion MAU worldwide.
- For context, as of January 2019, total worldwide population is 7.7 billion
- The number of internet users worldwide in 2018 was 4.021 billion, up 7 percent year-on-year
- The number of social media users worldwide in 2018 was 3.196 billion, up 13 percent year-on-year
- The number of mobile phone users in 2018 was 5.135 billion, up 4 percent year-on-year
- On average, people have 5.54 social media accounts
- The average daily time spent on social is 116 minutes a day
- 91% of retail brands use 2 or more social media channels
- 81% of all small and medium businesses use some kind of social platform
- Internet users have an average of 7.6 social media accounts
- Social media users grew by 320 million between Sep 2017 and Oct 2018. That works out at a new social media user every 10 seconds.
- Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp handle 60 billion messages a day
- Social networks are the biggest source of inspiration for consumer purchases with 37% of consumers finding purchase inspiration through the channel.

- 21% of consumers would rather message a brand on social media instead of calling up customer service.
- The most common reason why consumers reach out to brands on social media is because they have a question.
- The second most common reason is to have an issue with a product or service resolved.
- 34% of people reach out to brands on social media so they can commend them on their products or services. Brands should use all of these instances as an opportunity to build relationships.
- 21% of consumers are more likely to buy from brands that they can reach on social media.
- Close to half the world's population (3.03 billion people) are on some type of social media.
- 64% of online shoppers say that a video on social media helped them decide on a product to buy.
- Only 43% of online stores receive significant traffic from their social media pages.
- 77% of Twitter users appreciate a brand more when their tweet is responded to. It takes about 10 hours on average for businesses to respond to a tweet, even though customers want a response within four hours.
- 59% of adults between 18 and 29 are using Instagram.
- The average person spends about 20 minutes on Facebook or one in every six minutes a person will spend online.
- 1.57 billion YouTube users watch about 5 billion videos on average every single day.
- 86% of women will look at social media before deciding to make a purchase.
- People are accessing 69% of their media on their smartphones.
- 89% of people on smartphones are using apps, while only 11% are using standard websites.
- Pinterest is number one for mobile social media, with 64% of referral traffic being driven by smartphones and tablets.
- 57% of all mobile users will not recommend a business if their mobile website is poorly designed or unresponsive.
- 40% of all mobile users are searching for a local business or interest.
- Mobile websites that load in 5 seconds or less will end in a viewing session that's 70% longer than their slower counterparts.
- Share of web traffic by device highly favours mobile at 52% (+4% year-on-year change), whilst Desktop remains in second place with only 43% of device share to all web pages, down by 3% year-on-year.

## Google

- Google processes 100 billion searches a month
- That's an average of 40,000 search queries every second
- 91.47% of all internet searches are carried out by Google
- Those searches are carried out by 1.17 billion unique users
- Every day, 15% of that day's queries have never been asked before
- Google has answered 450 billion unique queries since 2003
- 60% of Google's searches come from mobile devices
- By 2014, Google had indexed over 130,000,000,000,000 (130 trillion) web pages
- To carry out all these searches, Google's data centre uses 0.01% of worldwide electricity, although it hopes to cut its energy use by 15% using AI.

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# BLOGGING

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Blogging offers an easy way for businesses to share informative content with subscribers, fans and followers. Blogs are often considered at the heart of your online marketing efforts as they present the opportunity for you share better, more engaging content than a typical update on social media. This allows you to provide more value in every piece of content you create, helping you to connect with your audience more and become a valued source of information.

## What's Good About Blogging?

- A great tool for improving search engine rankings
- Adds personality to your website, showing a 'human' side to your business
- Helps boost industry perception and can place you as an authority in your sector
- It is inexpensive, there are many blog platforms such as WordPress that allow you to set up a Blog for free

## What's Not so Good About Blogging?

- Not useful for companies that cannot be open with information
- A successful blog takes a lot of thought and time so is not suitable for businesses without the time or writing skills

## Need to Know Facts, Stats and Tips About Blogging

- On WordPress alone, 74.7 million blog posts are published every month
- Blogs have been rated as the 5th most trusted source for accurate online information.
- From 2014 to 2017, there was almost a 400% increase in paid content promotion from bloggers.
- The average word count of top-ranked content in Google is between 1,140 and 1,285 words.
- Companies who blog receive 97% more links to their website.
- Blog posts that incorporate video attract 3 times as many inbound links as those without video.
- Featuring a blog as a key part of your website will give you a 434% better chance of being ranked highly on search engines.
- 10% of blog posts are compounding, which means organic search increases their traffic over time.
- Compounding blog posts generate 38% of overall traffic.
- Companies that published over 16 blog posts per month received almost 250% more traffic than companies that published up to four monthly posts.
- Bloggers that post daily get 5 times more traffic compared to those that don't.
- Titles with 6 to 13 words tend to attract the highest and most consistent amount of traffic.



- On average, companies with blogs produce 67% more leads per month.
- Once you write 21 to 54 blog posts, blog traffic can increase by up to 30%.
- Companies that blog get twice as much traffic from their email marketing than those that don't.
- 94% of people who share posts do so because they think it might be helpful to others.
- Using images in your blog posts gets them 94% more views.
- 47% of buyers consume three to five pieces of content before making a purchase decision.
- 43% of people tend to skim blog posts.

## Why You Need a Blog for Your Business

### ***It's Great for SEO***

Blogs are a fantastic resource for improving search engine rankings as filled with relevant content they provide an ideal platform for your targeted keywords to be used in a natural setting. A blog also encourages people to link to your website which adds to your credibility in the search engine's eyes and allows you to build internal links within your site, making it more easily navigated by search engine spiders. By providing regular and fresh content, search engines will visit your page more frequently helping you gain maximum search exposure as quickly as possible.

### ***Allows you to Easily Keep People Informed and Shows Your Personality***

The internet can often be an impersonal place. Having a blog offers an informal and chatty platform for your opinions, stories, humour, and advice that gives your business a human face. This great ability to humanise your business through blogging ultimately makes your business appear more engaging, relatable and trustworthy to others. The space that blogging gives you to go over and above the basic everyday postings on social media presents the opportunity for your customers to get to know you better, so whether you are sharing industry expertise, reviewing a product or sharing an aspect of your brand story, each post acts as a small piece of your business puzzle that each makes up the elements of your story. As those pieces all fit together, they give your customers the wider picture and put your business into context, helping them to better understand who you are, what you do, and ultimately tells them why they should care about you.

### ***It Increases Your Authority***

By regularly updating your business blog with valuable, interesting and relevant industry analysis and comment, it shows that you have a deep interest in your sector and are more informed than the average participant; giving potential customers a compelling reason to choose you over competitors. Moreover, those customers will continue to visit and spread the word to others of your valuable and interesting blog.

## Blogging: What, and How Often?

Before you jump in and start blogging there are seven key strategic questions you must answer in order to ensure your blog is going to be in line with your business objectives and ultimately be a successful addition to your social media marketing strategy.

### ***Have You Determined Your Blog's Business Objectives?***

One of the first things you must do is determine what you want your blog to achieve for your business. Whether you want to use it to support sales by giving potential customers useful information in the form of how-tos or use it as an outlet to build your brand by providing content that supports your offering, having clear objectives for your blog helps optimise its reach and impact and when you later come to measure your success, you will have a clearer idea of what metrics to track.

### ***Common Blogging Goals***

- Build Brand Awareness
- Attract new Customers or Generate Leads
- Provide Post-Sales Support
- Inform, Educate and Entertain your Audience
- Demonstrate your Expertise and Become an Authority in Your Sector
- Drive Direct Income
- Build Long-Term Relationships with your Community

### ***Where Will You Host Your Blog?***

One of the initial hurdles when forming a blog is picking a service that will be right for your business. Many businesses choose free providers in the beginning such as WordPress and switch to self-hosted sites once they are more comfortable with blogging. Much like when you choose what other social media platforms to be on, you need to choose a platform that is relevant for your business and that offers you the services you are looking for.

### ***Have You Defined Your Target Readers?***

In addition to determining your objectives, having a clear idea of your target readers is paramount as your posts can then be tailored around content that is going to instantly capture their interest. It is also important to consider how your demographic behaves on social media for example how they like to receive their information (short snappy paragraphs, video links, long content etc.) and whether they are people who actively comment or not, as blog posts can then be tailored accordingly to maximise your potential for impact and engagement.

### ***Have You Developed Your Blog's Voice?***

Blogs are a great way for business to show a 'human' side to your business that people much prefer to interact with. It is important to have an idea of what voice you want for your blog that can be consistently applied across all your posts, especially if your business blog is going to be managed by several different contributors. Put simply, avoid generic corporate speak and replace it with your own unique voice and customers will be more drawn to and engage with your blog.

### ***Have I Chosen the Best Blog Layout?***

One of the first things you need to do when you start a blog is to choose a blog template layout. Do you want your blog to look like a traditional website? Or an online portfolio or magazine? Most blogging applications offer a variety of themes to choose from. Here are the most commonly used blog layout options to help you decide which one is right for your blog:

- **One-column** typically looking similar to online journals, this layout includes a single column of content with no sidebars on either side of the content. The benefit of this template is that readers give 100% of their attention to your content, however this template layout does not leave you with room for promotion of additional information, except throughout or at the end of posts. Choose this layout if you have a personal blog and have no need to display any additional information other than the content of each post.
- **Two-column** This is the most common layout as it allows bloggers to offer more information and features on the same page as their blog posts. This blog layout template includes a wide main column, which typically takes up at least three-quarters of the screen width, as well as a single sidebar that can appear to the left or right of the main column. Usually, the main column includes blog posts, and the sidebar includes additional elements such as ads, links to archives, RSS subscription links for example. The key to making this layout work for your business is to ensure that the sidebar focuses on your business goals, with the most important elements at the top.
- **Three-column** A three-column blog template layout includes a main column that usually spans approximately two-thirds of the screen width as well as two sidebars. Blog posts are usually displayed in the main column and additional elements are shown in the two sidebars. If you produce a large amount of content that you want to promote alongside your articles, the three-column layout gives you plenty of space for promotion. This layout can distract readers from the main article but can also keep them on your website longer, as they will have plenty of related content to click through to.

- **Magazine** A magazine blog template layout uses a variety of boxes of content, or featured spaces, to highlight specific content such video, images, and blog posts. This makes the home page look more like a page on a newspaper than a blog, however, interior pages can look like traditional blog pages. This type of layout is best for a blog that publishes a significant amount of content each day and as such needs a way to display a lot of content on the home page at the same time.
  
- **Photo, Multimedia, and Portfolio** If the majority of your blog content is made up of images or video, this type of template layout would be perfect for your blog design. These layouts are used to show a variety of images or videos in an appealing way, with images or videos displayed attractively across the home page.
  
- **Website or Business** This type of template layout makes your blog look like a traditional website. If you want your blog to look like a website, use a website or business blog template layout.
  
- **E-Commerce** An e-commerce blog template layout is designed to make it easy for you to display products using images and text and usually incorporate a shopping basket function as well. If you plan to sell products through your website, this template layout would be a good option for you.
  
- **Landing Page** A landing page blog template layout turns your blog into a sales page that is designed to drive conversions using some type of form or other mechanism to capture desired results. This layout is perfect if you're using your blog as a place to capture leads, sell an eBook or drive app downloads, for example.
  
- **Mobile** A mobile blog template layout enables you to create a site that is completely mobile-friendly. If you know your audience will be viewing your site through mobile devices this template layout is vital as it ensures content loads quickly and accurately on smartphones and tablets.
  
- **Resume** A popular layout among job seekers and individuals who are trying to build their brand online. If you're looking for a job or need a site to communicate your skills and experience, a resume blog template is a very good option for you.

*Whichever blog template layout you choose, remember these top tips!*

- Unless you're an affiliate marketer or a publisher that generates income from advertisers, **don't give visitors any external links to leave your website**, unless they point back to your main website.
- **Strive for Simplicity:** Simplicity is the best rule in design. Whilst Many WordPress themes come with lots of colours, complex layouts, flashy animations, etc. in most cases you do not really need all that. Find a theme that looks good and is not overly complicated to navigate.
- **Responsive is Not Optional:** Responsive themes adjust their layout across different screen sizes and devices. Google shows mobile friendly websites on top in their mobile search results and a significant number of web traffic today is generated from mobile devices. This means that regardless of your site topics and demographics your blog needs to be responsive and fully mobile ready. Most WordPress themes are already responsive by default, but ensure you check that the theme you are choosing for your website is mobile friendly.

#### ***Have you Listed Features to be Regularly Included in Your Posts?***

Deciding on what major content categories you want to include regularly helps you to stay focused and maintains a clear direction for your posts to go in order to ensure your content is in line with your business goals and is targeting reader's needs. Part of this process is to also determine how often you will post new content on your blog as having a clear schedule of when you will be posting is paramount in order to ensure it supports and is in line with your wider social media strategy.

#### ***Have You Included Multiple Opt-in Forms?***

If you want to convert blog readers into email subscribers to promote your business products and services, you need to have multiple opt-in forms on your blog. There are several different ways to implement them on your blog with SumoMe, for example being a popular tool that allows you to add a variety of opt-in forms to any website. You can add opt-in forms anywhere on your site, including the sidebar, footer, after a post, in floating bars, in slide-ins and in pop-ups. Whilst you don't want to go overboard, it is important to make sure that there is an opt-in form available on your blog so readers can subscribe at any time.

#### ***Have You Included Social Sharing Buttons?***

Social sharing buttons are vital for your blog post content as they make it easier for your readers to share your content across social networks. If you are comfortable editing your blog design, you can choose to add the official sharing buttons from Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest and your other chosen networks. If you'd rather use a plugin, there are a vast number of tools available with Shareaholic being a popular example as it works with most major website platforms including Bigcommerce, Blogger, Shopify, Squarespace, Tumblr, Weebly, Wix and WordPress. The advantage of using a social sharing

platform rather than installing the buttons manually is the analytics that become available to you, allowing you to learn more about how your content is shared and who shares it.

### ***Have You Installed Content Analytics?***

Besides the above social sharing analytics, there are several additional analytics tools you need to set up on your blog to help you assess how well your content performs. Two popular tools are Google Analytics with functions such as The Behaviour report that show you details about the traffic your content receives. In addition, Google Webmaster Tools has a great feature called the Search Analytics report which shows you how your content performs in search based on the number of times seen, the number of clicks and the average position in search. By utilising these tools and regularly analysing your blog content analytics you will optimize your content marketing strategy to ensure that you are driving the best results from your blog posts.

### ***Have You Created Unique User Accounts?***

If you have multiple people blogging for your business, whether they are employees, guests or freelance writers, you should create a unique user account for each new person. Platforms like WordPress already allow each author to have a custom author bio with their posts and an author page that archives all their articles. Not only is this beneficial from an organised point of view it can aid your SEO efforts as when people search for the author in Google, they might stumble upon your blog. If you have dozens of popular authors, this will allow you to get additional visibility in search and increased traffic to your blog.

### ***How Will Your Blog Align with Other Marketing Efforts?***

Maintaining a blog should fuel and enhance your overall content marketing efforts. So similarly, when you create a clear posting schedule for your blog be sure to consider how each post is going to fit in with and enhance your other marketing efforts. Consider questions such as how am I going to use my other platforms to promote my blog posts when they are published? And how can each blog post supplement this week's promotional strategy?

*Now it's time to write your Blog, there are several fundamental basics to follow to ensure you create a powerful and engaging Blog post.*

### ***Say Something Interesting and Useful***

Write your blog with your target audience in mind so rather than trying to appeal to a generic wider audience, your content contains specialised information and analysis that those interested in your services or in your sector would read. By openly giving out advice and information you will become an online repository of specialist knowledge and this will attract the attention of your target audience.

### ***Be Creative***

People always respond better to something that is new, fresh and clever so always brainstorm ideas in the mind-set of producing something that is creative and breaks the mould of other generic blog posts. You are competing in the fast-paced and growing world of social media marketing, so you need to make yourself stand out and give potential customers a compelling reason to choose you over your competitors.

### ***Keep it Short and Sweet***

An ideal blog post is between 400- 1,600 words to be easy enough to digest quickly. It is widely accepted that online readers are becoming lazy and it becomes difficult and unappealing to read something crowded with text and heavy paragraphs so keep paragraphs succinct and sentences short and snappy. Keep in mind that readers will often read less and less the further down an article or post they read so make sure the important point or link you want to make is made early on.

### ***Never go for the Direct Sell***

When you first start blogging, it may be tempting to go with the direct sale approach posting information about how wonderful your business is and all the things you sell or offer. This is not a successful approach and, in most cases, will see you viewed as a spammer and will quickly lead to people losing interest in your blog. To avoid making this mistake you must strike a balance between subtle business blog posts and ones centred on customer engagement, with a favourable emphasis on the latter.

### ***Have a Compelling Title and Leading Paragraph***

It is paramount to draw the attention to your post by making your headline and introduction exciting. Choose the major point of your post and outline it clearly in the beginning, this is essential if you are going to encourage your readers to click through to the full post.

### ***Balance SEO with Good Content***

Whilst it is important to include keywords in your blog, especially within titles, you need to strike a balance between catchiness and SEO. Do not flood readers with keywords but do pay attention to the basics such as clean URLs and Meta descriptions.

### ***Include a Call to Action (CTA)***

Blog posts should end with something that moves the reader onto a next step be it a call to comment or to connect on another social media platform, this should not be an opportunity to directly hard sell a product however, as this often loses your readers trust.

## **How to Write an Effective Blog Post**

### ***Headline***

The headline represents one of the most important parts of your blog post. It is the deciding factor on whether a reader is compelled enough to click on and read your blog post or not and for this reason it needs to grab attention and be concise in stating to the reader the benefit of clicking the link and reading the content. Do not stress out over your blog titles before you start writing. Often, the best titles come after you have already written a post. That being said, it can be helpful to come up with a basic title before you start writing. Whilst 9 times out of 10, you will change this title later, it will in the beginning give you some direction and focus as you write. Whilst there is no definitive perfect headline template, there are several key characteristics of a powerful headline that compels the reader to click on. Powerful headlines are very concise and specific, they focus on the reader and what interests them and are keyword-optimised ensuring the right type of reader is going to find them.

- ***Focus on Blog Title Accuracy***

Whilst it may be tempting (and is relatively easy) to come up with a headline that gets clicked, for example "10 Tips to Increase Your Productivity By 10,000%". These types of crazy, outlandish headlines will ultimately destroy your credibility. You need to ensure that whichever headline format you decide on, the basic premise of your title is accurate and when people click on your headline, they are genuinely pleased with the content they discover as it meets their expectations and delivers on whatever promise the headline made.

- ***Keep your Blog Title Length Short***

According to Kissmetrics, the ideal length for a headline is just 6 words as it is easily digestible, short and snappy. When it is not possible to stick to a 6-word limit however, Buffer suggests using your most important words at the beginning and end of your titles where readers are most likely to notice them.

- ***Optimise your Blog Title for SEO and Click-throughs***

If you want your blog posts to rank for specific keywords or phrases, placing these in your title is vital. Using keywords in your titles is also especially important for getting people to click on your



posts in the SERP's (search engine results pages). When people search for a particular phrase, they are highly likely to click on search results that closely match their search term.

- **Google Search**

While it is important to include your keywords in your title, you also want to make sure your title is catchy and clickable and makes readers want to click through.

- **A/B Testing can Make all the Difference**

Testing out various headlines on your audience is a time consuming but vital task as having the right headline can make all the difference.

### ***Example Headline Templates That Grab Attention***

- How to Get The \_\_\_\_\_ you Want Using \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 Secrets your \_\_\_\_\_ Won't Tell you About \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 Things \_\_\_\_\_ Can Teach You About \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 Little Known Ways to \_\_\_\_\_
- The Ultimate Step by Step Guide to \_\_\_\_\_
- Best Practices for \_\_\_\_\_
- 100 Shocking Statistics About \_\_\_\_\_
- Now You Too Can Have \_\_\_\_\_ with These 5 Easy Steps
- How to be a World-Class \_\_\_\_\_ Like \_\_\_\_\_
- How to \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_ You Can Be Proud Of
- 10 Things you Must Know About \_\_\_\_\_ But Don't
- 15 Things you Never Knew about \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 Unexpected ways to be Successful at \_\_\_\_\_
- Why Your Business Needs to Know About \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Things You Must Do After \_\_\_\_\_
- How to \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ Days
- 20 \_\_\_\_\_ Every \_\_\_\_\_ Should Include
- 10 \_\_\_\_\_ Mistakes that I Should Have Done Differently
- Why I Don't Do \_\_\_\_\_
- 11 \_\_\_\_\_ Tips I Wish I Had Known

### ***Opening Paragraph***

The opening paragraph or introduction is meant to provide the setup for the main content and put the subject matter into context. This section of the blog post needs to clearly explain to the reader what your blog post is going to address and compel them to feel as though they will achieve a significant benefit from reading on and taking in what you have to say. As a general guide there are several key characteristics of a successful opening paragraph that you need to include.

- **Be Direct:** Online readers prefer to be clearly told what they are about to read and why they should do so. Avoid over complicated, artsy style writing and make it clear to the reader what you are talking about and why they should listen and take note.

- **Be Concise and Compelling:** The success of getting readers to read your whole post lies in how well you convince them at the start of your blog post that they simply must read on. Whether you are offering exclusive content, a competition or some highly valuable advice, make it clear to the reader and in doing so give them a compelling reason to keep reading.
- **Be Bold and Creative:** Ensure you set yourself apart from other generic blog posts by being creative. Do not stick to generic writing styles, layouts and subject matter as being bold - but still informative and valuable - can attract a lot of attention and encourage a reader to carry on and read the whole post.

### ***The Main Body***

The main section of your blog will provide the substance to what you have outlined in your title and opening paragraph. It is important within this section you adhere to several characteristics that constitute a well written blog post;

- **Logical Structure** - You need to ensure that your blog follows a clear and logical structure that flows coherently, making the topic easy for your reader to understand.
- **Short and Succinct Sentences** – Short and succinct sentences ensure readers keep interest as it makes your content easily scannable and digestible, an important aspect for skim readers.
- **Examples and Evidence** – Providing evidence and examples that back up your points helps you appear more of an authority with your writing as well as helping your readers to grasp concepts by offering clear and obvious examples that clearly support what you are discussing.
- **Images** – Having a variety of images helps the visual appeal of your post as they break up the blocks of text and help to visually illustrate specific points.

### ***Conclusion***

The conclusion should be a short statement that clearly summarises and wraps up your post. This is the area when you should also include a clear call to action in which you direct the reader onto a next step after they have finished reading your post. Whether it is a link to an external site or encourages them to subscribe, you need to ensure the connection with you does not end when your blog post does.

### ***Proof Reading and Optimisation***

Once you have finished writing your blog you need to consider the important factors of proof reading and optimisation before you publish your post. This process includes a thorough read through of your blog looking into areas such as formatting, grammar, spelling, keyword placement and other optimisation opportunities. Look to analyse these several key areas;

- **Strategically Placed Keywords** – By including relevant keywords and phrases that your target readers are using and strategically placing them throughout your blog post, you tailor your content in a way that is going to ensure you are targeting reader's needs and the chance for

maximum search engine visibility. Look to strategically place these keywords across your post from your URL, to your blog title and subheadings.

- **General Formatting** – Ensure your blog post is readable and visually appealing by thoroughly checking your formatting and paying attention to key areas such as including sub-headings to help break up text, breaking large blocks of text with images, being consistent with font choice and text size and generally ensuring ease of read with succinct sentence structure and clearly made points.
- **Correct Links and Visuals** – If you have included links ensure that they point to the correct location. If you have included visuals such as pictures and videos also ensure you reference and credit where you got them from.

## 12 Quick Content Ideas for Blog Posts

- **Tips and How-To's**  
Providing informative tips, advice and how-to posts can be extremely useful to your customers and has the added benefit of promoting your product and its uses.
- **Behind the Scenes/ A Day in the Life of**  
People love to see behind the scenes as it shows them an aspect of your business that they would not normally see. 'Day in the life' posts are a popular example.
- **Contests and Other Exclusive Content**  
Running a contest and sharing exclusive content always generate engagement and interest. Just make sure the content and/or prize you offer is relevant and valuable to your audience.
- **Relevant Industry News and Updates**  
If you know any relevant news/ events that are going to interest or affect your customers, share it with them and you will become a trusted industry news source.
- **Compile a Useful Resource List**  
If you come across any valuable and informative resources such as links, websites, books and products related to your business and industry, share it with your customers. This can go some way towards establishing your blog as a trusted source of information.
- **Customer Testimonials / Success Stories**  
A customer testimonial goes a long way in terms of establishing credibility and interest in your product or service. If you have received a good recommendation or someone has found another handy use for your product then share it on your blog.
- **Interviews with Industry Leaders/ Key Figures**  
If you have an industry expert that is of interest to your customers or have celebrity contacts then conducting an interview and sharing it on your blog is a sure-fire way to attract attention, even more so if they share exclusive content.

- **Content that Helps Humanise Your Brand**  
Sharing stories from your business founders, staff members, charity work to your business morals and values and your business highs and lows helps your audience get to know and care about you as it shows there exists a real human behind your real business.
- **“Linkbait” Posts**  
These posts are designed to gather page views, typically post structures include list posts (e.g. “17 Ways to Save Big on XX”) or articles that take a controversial viewpoint (e.g., “Why You Shouldn't Never Buy XX”). Remember an attention-grabbing headline is not enough; you must deliver in the post what you promised.
- **Link Roundups**  
Compile interesting and relevant blog posts into a weekly roundup to provide value to your readers. This also has the added benefit of making gathering news items easy for them!
- **Video Posts**  
Write a short snappy 1-2 paragraph introduction and then embed a video. It can be a sneak peek at a new product, a product demo or explainer video for example.
- **Infographic posts**  
Creating an infographic is a great way to present all data in a visually appealing, easily consumed format.

***Top Tip:** There are plenty of ideas for content out there. Every book you read, event you attend, blog you visit and interview you hear on the news, is rich with ideas for content. So, keep your eye out and have a notepad handy so you always write down any ideas. But what happens for those times when you run dry? Here are four tools to help generate content for your blog:*

- **Google Trends:** Google Trends keeps you up to date on the day-to-day pulse of your audiences' interests. With Google Trends you can see the frequency and popularity of Google searches related to your topic and test the subject with Google Trends.
- **MyBlogU:** This free online platform allows you to crowdsource and brainstorm with other content creators.
- **Quora:** This is a crowd-sourced, question-and-answer website where questions are asked, answered, edited and organised by its community of users. This can help lead you to the types of questions that real people are asking. As well as having the benefit of building your authority, engagement, and traffic from being a regular contributor on Quora.
- **Buzzsumo:** A fantastic source for research, with Buzzsumo you enter a topic or a URL in its search box and then displays a wealth of information. Buzzsumo provides backlinks and shows the content that performs best on social media.

## 8 Point Checklist Before You Publish Your Blog Post

### ***Have I Met my Goal for This Blog Post?***

Whatever you set out to achieve with your blog post, whether it's getting people to take part in research, purchase a product or sign up to your newsletter make sure that the material and links fully support your aim and you have clear and relevant call to actions. Having clear goals also makes it easier to measure your success later down the line and assess whether the blog post achieved what it set out to do.

### ***Is my Post Easy to Read, Well- Developed and Presented?***

Having a well- formatted blog post is crucial for both ease of read and keeping the attention of readers. Blog posts, even when the tone is causal, are ultimately still professional papers and when writing them you are representing your business as much as you do when at meetings and in general. It is vital that you generate a structured blog template and form a routine before you publish around proofreading your post, paying particular attention to several key areas.

- Is your information bulleted and has numbered lists for easy consumption?
- Are the links you use relevant and pointed to the correct webpage?
- Have you used short and succinct sentences to get your point across successfully?
- Are your section headings clear and specific to their individual points?
- Is your post well concluded with good evidence?
- Does the tone of voice/language fit the overall tone of your blog, and your brand's editorial guidelines?
- Did you use custom-made images and screenshots instead of stock photos whenever possible?
- Have you given proper credit to the images/content you used in your blog post?
- Have you taken to time to proofread and made sure your format is consistent with spacing between paragraphs as well as font styles and sizes?

### ***Have I Directly Targeted my Audience in This Post?***

You need to ensure that your blog post has been directly written with your target audience in mind. This involves you knowing and learning aspects about them from what content resonates best with them to what needs, interest, problems and questions they have as customers. Ensure your content contains specialised information that your customers will want to read. In doing so will not only will you be maximising interest and engagement from your readers, but you will also be proving your expertise in your industry.

### ***Does my Post Contain Relevant Keywords?***

In order to increase the potential for your blogs reach, every blog post you write should focus on and reiterate certain relevant keywords for your business. Ideally, when you are writing keep in mind 5-10

keywords and weave them into your content from the title through to the main sections of your post, taking care to not over flood your content making it unreadable and incoherent. As you become more comfortable with writing your posts you will soon find that you develop this skill to fully optimise your posts confidently.

### ***Does the Title Grab my Attention and Make me Want to Click on it?***

The main section of your blog post may be full of brilliant and valuable content, but if you don't invest the time into creating an optimised your title that makes readers want to click on it, you are making a mistake. When forming a title consider whether you yourself would click on it, is it going to solve a common problem? Improve an aspect of your life or is it exciting exclusive content? Whatever you decide, make sure it is compelling enough to click on and is optimised with keywords. You should also pay attention to the length of your title, bearing in mind that the optimal length is between 40 – 60 characters long. A shorter title may not be as descriptive and specific enough to capture attention, and a longer title will be cut off at 60 characters in search results, making your click-through rates likely to decrease.

### ***Have I Backed up my Points with Good Evidence?***

One of the main ways to become a trusted source of information is to provide content that is reliable and backed up with solid evidence to support what you are claiming. Before you publish your post make sure all the points you make are coherent and evidence is there that supports and justifies what you are claiming. Remember people may be making business decisions based on what you write so you must appear informed and reliable and give them clear reasons why what your saying is true and accurate.

### ***Have I Included a Clear CTA?***

By ensuring you include a clear call to action in every post you are making sure that each post is purposeful for your business. Whether you direct the reader to an external site or ask them to leave a comment for example you need to consistently encourage the reader to continue the interaction with you.

### ***How am I Going to Promote this Post?***

To ensure maximum reach and impact you need to consider how you are going to promote your post once it is published. There are many tips later in this section, but also consider the means of promotion you personally have at your disposal that can help get your blog post seen more.

Although it takes some experimentation to find the best publishing schedule for you, there are two things that should always be considered and will dictate your blogging schedule; your business goals and what your audience wants.

In general, publishing one new blog post a week is optimal because it helps maintain good relationships with customers, attract natural search traffic, and avoids burnout from writing too often. This however may vary depending on what works best for your company, goals and readers so it is important to experiment to find a blogging schedule that works for you. For example, if your goal is to become a cutting-edge information resource, you might want to post shorter articles more often or if your main audience is mostly interested in technical or behind-the-scenes details, you'll probably publish longer articles less often. The first step to determining your ideal blogging frequency is to find the perfect balance of what you want and what your audience wants.

To maximise the benefits of having a blog you need to ultimately ask yourself, can you keep this schedule consistently? Can you always publish high-quality content at this rate? And will you have enough content for this schedule? Once you've discovered the best times to blog, being consistent with your publishing schedule has the benefit of increasing SEO value and encourages readers to come back regularly for more.

## **How to Build a Following and Amplify Your Impact**

Writing your blog post is only the beginning. The next challenge is to promote your blog in order to get maximum exposure and attract attention. Having a loyal band of readers who regularly engage with your blog and come back for more is fundamental to achieving success as a blogger. You may have the best blog in your niche filled with valuable and informative content, but what good is that if you do not have a regular stream of readers to appreciate and act on your work? No matter what else, you need faithful readers who keep coming back for more.

Relying solely on search engines mixed with a bit of promotion might get you a few eyeballs, but fundamental to your success is recognising that building a loyal readership is not something that happens overnight, it is hard work! An ongoing conscious effort to create, maintain and learn what works best for you, using smart marketing techniques and tactics.

### ***Syndication***

One of the most powerful mechanisms of a Blog is its RSS feed that allows you to automatically feed your Blog's content to many different places, including many social networking sites. This can significantly expand your reach and saves you hours of time where you would otherwise have to post your content manually. There are also many other social sites that allow you to plug in your blog's RSS

feed, make sure to link it to all your available platforms and the potential reach of your blog becomes significantly increased.

### ***Seek Out and Comment on Other Blogs with Similar Topics***

Providing helpful, valuable comments on other blogs can be a great way to generate traffic, develop relationships and build a following. Once you have finished a blog post on a topic it is worthwhile to do a quick search to find other blogs covering the same topic, you can then add your viewpoint in a genuine, non-self-promotional way. Showing yourself to be insightful and willing to provide advice is always welcomed and appreciated and is often rewarded in the form of new relationships with other bloggers who are more likely to mention and promote your blog.

### ***Promote your Blog***

Anywhere your customers interact with your brand is an opportunity to encourage them to look at and interact with your blog. There are several key areas in which you can promote your blog, from mentioning it on your e-newsletter, your email signature, to your business card and product packaging, promoting it across all your other social media platforms and reaching out to influencers in your niche when you publish great content.

- ***Email Marketing*** - highlight your blog post by including a clear link to and/or a section of your blog post to help drive traffic to your blog and your website.
- ***Twitter***- Tweet a summary of your post, a quote pulled from the post, or share a link to and encourage others to comment on the post itself. You can also include your blog's URL within your Twitter bio to help drive traffic.
- ***LinkedIn*** - Share your post with your groups and others that you know may be interested in it, this can start discussions, encourage engagement and debate that can fuel new content for future blog posts.
- ***Pinterest*** – Create a board that is purely for your blog posts remembering to use an interesting and relevant image to be pinned along with it and keep the boards location high, so it is clear and one of the first boards that is seen when on your profile.
- ***Guest Post Opportunities*** – Be proactive in looking for other bigger websites and blogs that have opportunities for guest posters. This is a great opportunity for more attention from a potentially new audience and linking back to your own blog can help with traffic. Similarly, you yourself can encourage others to guest post that can bring with it a new audience and following.
- ***Meetings, Events and Giving Presentations***- Remember that whenever and wherever you meet people this presents an opportunity for you to promote and refer the audience to your blog. Similarly, for the very savvy marketer, you can also utilise digital technologies such as QR codes on your packaging that can allow people to quickly and easily subscribe to your blog.
- ***Social Media Advertising*** – For particularly important and popular posts, consider using social media advertising to promote shares of your blog posts on Pinterest, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.



### ***Utilise Website Banners***

A website banner provides the perfect opportunity and space to create a clear call to action for driving traffic to your blog. Consider placing calls-to-action banners on different pages of your website and use language that encourages people to want to go forward and view your blog. One of the most popular website banner CTA's for blogs is to emphasise the number of people who are already subscribed to your blog and encourage the person that is reading to join them.

### ***Encourage and Ask for Participation***

Blogging is a great way to build an engaged community. By writing your posts in a way that fosters interaction and discussions from your readers you benefit from an active and interested community that will respond to what you write. By listening to what your readers have to say you will gather important information about them from their opinions, interests and ideas to suggestions about your business, all of which are greatly beneficial as they will help guide future content creation and inform business decisions.

### ***Host a Contest***

Running a contest on your blog is an excellent way to do something positive for your audience while growing your brand. Practically every type of blog runs contests – whether that's as part of paid brand partnership or simply to fill a gap in their content calendars. The key with a giveaway prize is choosing something that encourages people to enter because it is relevant to them and desirable enough to spur them into action. For example, blogs based on books can consider running a book giveaway with an amazon gift card, or for a beauty blogger, a bundle of premium beauty products would be perfect.

### ***Publish on a Consistent Schedule***

You need to publish quality content on your blog, but it is equally as important to publish quality content on a consistent schedule. Aim to publish a new blog post at least once a week as readers will come to expect a new blog post at a certain time and that will keep them on the lookout for it. They will know that if they go to your blog once a week, they will be greeted with new content. Similarly, if they go back to your blog and never see new content, they probably will not return. Making it vital to create and maintain a consistent posting schedule.

### ***Offer Multiple Ways to Subscribe***

Whilst growing your email list is one of the most important things you can do for your business, email should not be the only subscription option that you offer. Not everyone wants to receive more email in their inbox, and if visitors can only subscribe via email, they likely won't. Everyone should be able to find at least one option (email, RSS, Facebook, and Twitter for example) that suits their preferences.

### ***Show Off More of Your Content***

Visitors who enter your blog through your homepage should see lots of content options, just take the care to not make it overwhelming. Showcasing lots of content means readers will more likely find something of interest and stay on your blog for longer. If you prefer to maintain a minimalist design on your blog page, you can showcase extra content on your individual posts. You can do this by ensuring readers get to see related content and are encouraged to read more posts by referring to related blog posts using text links throughout your content. These links should compel visitors to click through to more of your content since it relates to the current blog post.

### ***Get Content Ideas From Visitors***

One of the best ways to get visitors to keep coming back to your blog is by letting them know that you want to create content just for them. You can do this by adding a quick and simple survey feature to your blog that asks visitors what they want to read about next. A survey not only helps you learn more about what content your visitors want, but also ensures that you will not run out of relevant topic ideas. An added benefit is that once visitors submit a topic idea, they might subscribe to your blog so they can see if you use their suggestion for new content.

### ***Allow Comments***

There is a recent trend to turn off comments on blogs in favour of social media engagement or, in some cases, to reduce the amount of moderation required because of spam. By allowing visitors to leave comments on your blog you turn a site with informational articles into a community. Visitors just want their voice to be heard and if they know they can ask the author questions and interact with other readers, it makes them more likely to return. To encourage visitors to become loyal readers and members of your community, be sure to actively reply to comments on your blog after a post has been published. Whether the comments are good or bad.

# Tips for Success

## ***Write for People***

With all the technical aspects of blogging to consider when you are writing it is easy to forget that you are ultimately writing for people. Whilst it is important to consider aspects such as keywords, the most successful bloggers are those that never stop listening to their audience and strive to better understand their needs and interests. This passion and genuine intention of getting to know their customers is reflected in their content that is always valuable and engaging.

## ***Show Your Personality***

To stand out from the crowd you need to humanise your blog by sharing your personality, interests and stories that helps people to get to know you and really connect and care about your brand. Consumers want to know the real people behind a business and by showcasing your personality and what makes you unique you will ultimately grow a collection of loyal followers.

## ***Keep Going***

Maintaining a successful blog is a process involving a lot of effort and as time progresses often gets neglected or becomes lower down in a business list of priorities. The key is to keep going and keep it one of your top priorities as search engines and readers want regular, fresh content that will keep them coming to your blog. Otherwise, they will both soon lose interest.

## ***Deal with Negativity in a Positive Way***

Rather than simply deleting any negative comments you receive, as even the most universally loved businesses receive negative comments, view them as an opportunity to win over a customer offering help, guidance or even acknowledging where something went wrong. By dealing with negativity in an open and authentic way you can help build rapport and trust with your customers.

## ***Include Your Key Contact Information***

You need to remember to include your key contact information clearly within your blog as you want to make it as easy as possible for a potential engagement or business opportunity to get in touch with you.

## ***Make Sure you Include Social Media Sharing Buttons***

To help give your blog content extended reach ensure that you include social media sharing buttons on every post. This encourages readers who have enjoyed your post to share it within their own personal

networks and this will expand your posts reach beyond your own connections, opening your content out to a whole new audience.

### ***Include Visuals***

Typically, blogs that include visuals such as a photograph, infographic or video tend to perform better than posts that are purely text based. So be sure to include some type of visual content within your post that is relevant and position it to make the format more visually appealing to readers and breaks up blocks of text.

### ***Make Your Post Easily Digestible for Skim Readers***

In order to keep readers attention, it is important to format your post in such a way that it is easily digestible for skim readers. This involves using subheadings, bullet points and short, succinct paragraphs that ensure there are no heavy paragraphs and your post is clear and easily readable.

### ***Don't Forget Your Sidebar CTA'S***

The homepage for your blog is a great area in which to utilise and help generate leads and interest. Make sure you place prominent and interesting CTA banners and buttons at the top of and on the sidebar of your blog. These are great areas to encourage others to connect with you on your other social media platforms and to promote your latest offers and more.

### ***Don't Forget to Ask For Feedback***

Remember as you grow your blog and develop and gain new audiences it is vital that every so often you conduct a survey on your audience to gain feedback and ensure that the information you are posting is still resonating with them and they are finding it useful and interesting. Questions should address topics such as what formats they prefer to receive their content (text, video or audio etc.) and remember to give readers the opportunity to make their own suggestions that will ultimately benefit your efforts and provide future content ideas for you.

### ***Invite Guest Bloggers***

Inviting guest bloggers has several benefits, from giving your audience a fresh perspective to driving new audiences and helps relieve a bit of pressure off you if you do not have the time to post a blog yourself that week/month. Just be sure to research the best guest bloggers in your area and find one that fits well with you and your ethos.

### ***Read and Learn***

Reading and learning from other blogs in your industry is a great way to better your own posts. Not only will you boost your own knowledge in your field and become a better writer, but you can also learn other important aspects of other business blogs, from what they write and how their audience responds to giving yourself the opportunity to voice your opinion and add your thoughts to the conversations of others. Reading lots of other blogs will also help guide future content creation for you as you can share any valuable blogs or articles you come across and of course you can be inspired to create your own posts based on ideas/debates/topics you have seen or read.

## **Common Mistakes to Avoid**

### ***Not Enabling Conversation***

Your blog is an on-going social conversation, and not allowing conversation to occur on your blog is a mistake. Whilst allowing blog comments can open you up to criticism and negativity, it also provides an invaluable opportunity to connect with your audience. Your audience is vital to the success of your blog and likes to know that they are being heard so you need to open yourself to the conversation and enable and encourage your audience to respond to what you write. Beyond enabling commenting on your blog, you also need to remember the conversation is two-way, so respond to the comments readers leave and you are likely to develop a community around your writing that can help turn your customers into fans who will promote your products and services and provide you with quality feedback.

### ***Posting Inconsistently***

Over time blogs often become neglected and not updated regularly as businesses let it slip down their list of priorities. An inactive and forgotten blog can have negative impact on your online image so is not going to benefit your business or be a successful addition to your marketing strategy. It is therefore vital that you continually assess your time and resources and if you find yourself unable to maintain your writing routine comfortably then change and adapt it in order to maintain consistency and maximise your impact.

### ***No Diversity Among Post Types***

When businesses struggle to generate fresh and interesting ideas for their blogs this often leads to posts sounding generic and similar. When this is teamed with another common mistake in not including media content such as relevant videos and pictures, blog posts can look uninviting and will not capture a reader's attention. To avoid making this mistake make sure to post insightful and valuable content that your readers will want to read and looks visually appealing also. This is also a good reason why you should create a monthly content calendar!

### ***Only Talking About Your Business, Products and Services***

It is quite common to see businesses using their blog purely as a place to hard sell their products and services. This is one of the worst mistakes a business can make as to truly benefit from using a blog and social media in general you need to be social and develop relationships and connect with your audience. This involves getting to know them and genuinely build a rapport so that you can directly address their needs and share informative and valuable content that is going to build trust and create a community of loyal brand advocates.

### ***Publishing Without Promoting***

Your blog could be full of ground-breaking ideas and brilliantly valuable information but that is no good if no one can find or see it. Once you have published your post, remember to promote it across all your platforms and that includes tweeting it, mentioning it on Facebook, emailing it to someone you know would find it useful and putting it into your e-newsletter etc.

### ***Neglecting to Optimise for SEO***

Whilst you are ultimately writing for people, you still need to consciously act on the various ways you can optimise your blog for search. This means utilising your blog post titles with key words and strategically placing them throughout your content. Part of this process also involves a consideration of your blogs tags and using SEO friendly Text.

### ***Ignoring the Design Aspects of Your Blog***

Remember to consider the design aspects of your blog and ensure that they are optimised to generate leads and traffic for your business. From ensuring you have social media sharing buttons, a search box, a subscription CTA, clear website links and contact information to a clear, organised content filing system. All these need to be considered and optimised to -make it easier for visitors to find and view content and ultimately connect with you and take actions.

### ***Not Really Thinking About Your Post Title***

Your blog post title represents one of the most important aspects in the success of your blog as it is from seeing it that a viewer will ultimately decide whether to click on it and view your post. This means you need to take the time to understand the importance of optimising it and making sure it grabs attention, is clear and concise, directly targets and will be of interest to your audience. Read it aloud to yourself and ask, would I click on this? If the answer is no, then it is time for a rethink.

### ***Ignoring Blog Analytics***

If you fail to analyse your blogs analytics you are missing out on the opportunity to gain valuable insight as to whether your blog is successful and is reaching your business goals. It also helps you to determine important factors such as which types of posts are most successful and which are not, which will help guide future content creation and ensure you make well informed decisions on your future blogging efforts.

### ***Trying to Write for the Generic Masses***

Remember when writing your posts, you need to do so with your target audience in mind as this will ensure that your content is focused and informative to those who are interested in you and your industry. Writing to please a generic mass of people will not help your goal of becoming a source of valued information and expertise in your industry, so always consciously aim to directly target and address the needs and wants of your audience within your posts.

### ***Neglecting to Check Your Post for Typos***

Neglecting to read through your work to check for typos and other errors not only makes a post difficult to read and a point harder to get across, it also negatively impacts on your corporate persona leaving the reader with a less-than-professional opinion of you and your blog. Take the time to go through and address easily fixed errors such as spelling mistakes, typos and bad links as they can cost your business greatly in terms of readership and general opinion.

### ***You Don't Read and do Enough Research***

Doing your research on your blog topic before you write it is an important aspect of blogging. Reading allows you to be exposed to and learn from different types of literatures, writing styles, opinions and thoughts all of which will inform your own posts and help you develop a solid writing style. By gathering information and educating yourself on the debates surrounding your blog topic you also ensure that you can write a balanced article filled with accurate and relevant debates which will go a long way towards establishing your blog as a trusted and valued source of information for your audience.

### ***You See Other Bloggers as Nothing More Than Competition***

A common blogger mistake is to see others like themselves as competition and not utilise the great opportunities for your business that comes with collaboration. Rather than ignoring other bloggers, take the opportunity to build relationships with them and encourage interaction by joining their conversations and contributing to their sites by adding your voice with valuable and positive commentary. This goes a long way towards establishing yourself as a thought leader in your industry. By collaborating with other bloggers and sharing their articles you will also benefit from increased reach and will be opened to a whole new audience as they will likely reciprocate by sharing your content also.

### ***You Expect Overnight Success***

Having a successful and popular blog takes a lot of time, patience and consistency as it takes a while to grow an audience, find a comfortable writing style as well as posting schedule. Do not make the mistake of expecting to become an overnight success as in most cases it does not happen. Rather it is the result of a lot of hard work, patience and continually listening to feedback, checking your analytics to see what works and what does not for your blog and its audience.

## **52 Blog Post Ideas – One a Week for the Next Year!**

1. How Did You Get Started In Your Business? And How Did You Get To Where You Are Today?
2. Write Out A List Of FAQs
3. Get An Influencer To Guest Post
4. What Is The Most Creative Way That Someone Has Used Your Product?
5. Interview A Valued Customer
6. Create An Ultimate Guide to Something in Your Industry
7. Do a Q&A Interview With Your Team
8. Put Together A Fun Gif-Filled Post
9. What Would You Love To Learn How To Do?
10. Set Up A Contest On Your Blog
11. Share Your Free Gift
12. Try Something New and Write About What Happened
13. Share Your Charitable Efforts
14. A Day In Your Life
15. Celebrate Your Business's Birthday
16. What Advice Has Stuck With You For A Long Time?
17. Spoken Anywhere Recently? (Conference, Speech, Or Lesson).
18. What Are The Best Books/Tools/Resources In Your Niche That You'd Recommend?
19. What Is The Toughest Part Of Being A \_\_\_\_\_ (Your Job Title)
20. Create A Roundup Of The Best \_\_\_\_\_ (Topic)
21. Send Out A Poll, Survey, Or A Quiz Filled With Questions.
22. What Are The Top Things You've Learned Over The Past Year?
23. What Top Things Do You Wish You'd Known When You First Started (Your Job Title)?
24. Write a Review
25. Write An Open Letter to Your Younger Self
26. Reach Out To Experts And Combine The Quotes Into A Single Blog Post.
27. Write A Checklist On How To \_\_\_\_\_
28. A-Z Series Post on Your Industry
29. 100 Things...( Things you love, 100 things you enjoy, or 100 tools you swear by etc)
30. Thank Your Audience And Give Them Something Special
31. Let People Hear Your Voice With an Audio Post
32. Host Your Own Webinar
33. Create a Templates Or Download (a guide, worksheet, or a video course etc.)
34. Try Vlogging
35. Host A Live Workshop
36. Create Infographics
37. Create A Quick Reference Guide



38. Disprove a Theory or Myth
39. Showcase a Small Business or Entrepreneur You Love
40. Offer Advice for Tough Situations
41. Discuss Your Future Plans
42. Create a Regular Feature (Do a "customer of the week" spotlight or create a monthly collection of the best online articles that month etc.)
43. Create an Award
44. Share Your Customer Feedback
45. Reveal Industry Secrets or Expose Lies
46. Share a Highlight (What were the big milestones in your company's history?)
47. Share How You Got The Idea for Your Product/Service
48. Display a Sense of Humour (Consider giving a "how-to" post with a funny spin etc)
49. Write a Series (If you'd like to teach customers something complicated, break the topic into several parts)
50. Make an Industry Prediction
51. Popular Culture (Mention a celebrity or a pop culture touchstone and your readers will instantly relate)
52. Relate to The News (How are current events affecting your customers? Etc)

## Measuring Success

Like any other marketing strategy, the success of your blog must be measured against your business objectives. Analysing your blog's metrics will show you a wealth of information and insights and help determine whether your blog is having a measurable impact and reaching the goals that you wanted to achieve by having a business blog.

### ***Measuring Visitors***

One of the most basic metrics you can track is the count of people who read your blog content. You can look to them to assess whether your blog is successfully growing over time and importantly you can look at this data to view visits by individual blog articles. This important metric can then help you better understand what content resonates best with your audience, allowing you to then take the factors of your most successful blog posts and use these to create better content in the future.

### ***Measuring Leads***

Measuring what blog posts generate leads for your business is a true measure of a successful business blog as leads are what ultimately fuel the growth and success of your business. Look to examine what leads you generate from your blog posts and the rate at which those leads then convert into customers.

### ***Subscriber Count***

Your subscribers are the base readership of your content and you want to ultimately see that readership grow. Looking at how many people subscribe to your blog provides a solid indicator of the quality and consistency of your content.

### ***Engagement***

Engagement is about gauging how much people interact with you and the comments on your blog are a good way to measure engagement qualitatively. Your aim should be to create conversation and if your readers are interacting with and responding to your blog posts then it is a good indication that you are engaging your readers making them more likely to respond to and keep coming back to your blog.

### ***Authority***

A key validating factor for a blog is when others are discussing and referencing what you say. Look to measure the rates at which your blog posts are getting cited or referenced as this will give you a good measure of your authority. If you are consistently providing valuable information to your readers that they cite and share with others, not only do you generate a conversation you also become an authority within your sector.

## **How to Monetize Your Blog - A Quick Guide**

For many, Blogging is purely a passion project. A chance to freely share with the world your thoughts and opinions on things that matter most to you. But you can use blogging to earn money online by doing what you love. Once you are firmly on the path to success, paved with a strong blog filled with content that grabs the attention of a loyal audience, you can then look at the multiple avenues for bloggers to earn money from your work.

If you want to make money blogging, the first thing you need to do is gain a good following as in all honesty, it does not matter how many ads you place on your site or affiliate links you post, if nobody is reading in the first place then you are not going to generate much income at all from your efforts. So before you get too carried away with money making dreams, you need to tick off your list the few crucial requirements for making money on the internet.

- First and foremost, you need to make sure your website is **professional and user friendly**. Online users have a short attention span, so you want a site that showcases your brand, grabs attention, appeals to your audience and gives them a good user experience. You should also direct your attention towards optimizing your site for search engines, that way, when your users search for relevant keywords, you are giving your website the best chance it has of appearing high in the search engines' result pages.

- Next, think **powerful content and a dedicated audience**. You need a blog filled with good relevant content that matches up with your audience's interests. Pick your niche and create content with a strong focus and a clear target audience in mind. Use your blog to build your expertise in a particular area rather than trying to appeal to everyone, your goal is for readers to enjoy your articles and come back for more.
- Thirdly, **it's all about promotion**. For your efforts to be effective, you will need to promote your blog consistently so that you constantly drive traffic, engage with your audience, and strengthen your readership. One of the best ways to do this is with Email Marketing as sending a regular newsletter helps build brand loyalty, which ultimately means more robust blog traffic. Social media is also a great marketing tool for bloggers. You can share new and compelling content on YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn and be able to maintain a steady flow of traffic on your blog. You can also utilize social media by connecting and collaborate with other influencers in your niche, which helps build new traffic and generate brand loyalty.

If all this sounds like a lot of work, that is because it is! It is a serious commitment that if done right can result in a payoff. Having a solid following and steady blog traffic is the foundation of all blog monetization techniques, so if you are serious about making money, then it is seriously worth your time.

## *Monetizing Your Blog*

### **Allow Advertising**

One of the most reliable ways to make money with minimal effort from your side is by display advertisements throughout your site and easily collect revenue from each click. A lot of people have a negative opinion when it comes to on-site ads, as too many people go overboard with their ads, which makes their site look spammy and unprofessional. That said, it is possible to incorporate advertising into your site without making your users turn away. For the ads on your blog to be profitable, you simply need to make sure that they relate to your audience's interests.

There are a few different types of advertising you can use to earn money:

- **Pay per action ads:** You're paid every time someone clicks on the ad and completes a specified action such as requesting a quote or buying a product.
- **Pay per click (PPC) ads:** You earn money every time somebody clicks on the ad.
- **Cost per thousand (CPM) ads:** You get paid a flat rate for every 1,000 impressions an ad receives. Most banner ads fall into this category.
- **Personal sale ads:** Advertisers pay you up front to display ads on your site.

On-site advertising is one of the most common blog monetization strategies, but it is not particularly lucrative unless your site gets thousands of users per day. So, if you do not get a lot of traffic (yet), you may want to think strategically about your ad offerings and for example, explore your analytics and place your highest-paying ads on the pieces your audience are shown to interact with the most.

## **Use Affiliate Marketing**

As an affiliate, you partner with a brand to promote their products, and earn a commission for every product sale that originated from your blog. In a nutshell, Affiliate marketing works off a pay-per-click or pay-per-action model (just like ads). The key difference is that Affiliate marketing does not use flashy billboard-like display ads. Instead, you tend to just include an affiliate link within your content. The key with this type of monetization is to be careful about which products you allow to be recommend in your content. They must be relevant and provide value for your audience. To get started, try googling affiliate programs in your industry to see if there are any private affiliate programs for your niche. You can also search forums and Facebook for affiliate program groups and subscribe to industry-specific newsletters for business owners to help point you in the right direction.

## **Create Premium Content**

If you know you have got really good quality content that your users need or may seriously benefit from, you may want to consider making it premium content - content that your audience must pay to access. This can be in any form of media from an online course to help someone learn about a subject, to an eBook, Webinar, or a white paper. The right premium content offering for your website will depend on your niche, but if you put your most valuable content behind a paywall and drum up serious interest in that content, users will pay to access it.

## **Set up Membership Tiers**

Similar to premium content, membership tiers put selected content behind a paywall. While most of your posts should be free and readily available, consider creating a pricing plan in which you set aside exclusive content and perks for paying members. With membership tiers, people can sign up and pay a monthly or yearly subscription fee and in exchange they will receive benefits such as early access to sales, exclusive members-only content, or any other perks you want to offer. Remember you will need to persuade your readers that your premium content is worth paying for. A common tactic to do this is by keeping some samples available for free viewing to reel them in and once you have captivated your audience, you can work on persuading them to take a bigger and better bite.

## **Write Sponsored Posts**

A powerful and often successful option is to create sponsored content that highlights a specific product or service. A sponsored post often comes in the form of a product review. To get started, you will need to find a brand to partner with. While it is common practice for businesses to sometimes reach out to bloggers directly by an Instagram Dm for example, you can also take the initiative yourself and get in touch with brands to inquire about partnership opportunities. When you reach out, clearly show them how sponsoring your posts would benefit their business. Share your website traffic, explain how the interests of your fans align with their brand, and offer your ideas on how you could include their products in your content. Just remember to never compromise your integrity as a blogger by partnering with any random business, only work with businesses that you believe in and that you think would offer genuine

value to your readers. On the flip side, do not feel like you have to hide sponsored posts from your audience. Be honest and transparent with them and clarify any sponsored post with a short disclaimer.

## Blogging Maintenance Checklist

### DAILY

- ✓ Look through blog posts others have posted (ones you follow, blogs of industry insiders and others that you come across) and if relevant respond by adding your thoughts and/ or sharing it.
- ✓ Look to see if any new connections from other social media platforms have a blog and subscribe to it
- ✓ During the week gather information and sources for the following weeks blog post(s)
- ✓ Respond to any interaction and comments from others on your blog post(s) daily

### WEEKLY

- ✓ **Check Your Analytics** - Your analytics will help you figure out what your audience likes and does not like, so you can plan your future content better. It will also help alert you to any red flags early on. Regularly go through your analytics and ask; How is the traffic? Are there specific pages on your site that people seem to be bouncing out of? What kinds of topics resonate best with your audience? What headlines grab attention? What kind of keywords are bringing people to your website?

### MONTHLY

- ✓ **Update Your WordPress Installation, Theme and Plugins** - Make a habit of performing updates on a regular basis and remove unnecessary themes and plugins you are not using anymore.
- ✓ **Backup Your Site** - Backing up your blog regularly helps prevent disasters as if your site ever gets wiped out, you can simply do a restore. Backing up your data is made easy by a variety of different backup plugins. Popular examples include VaultPress or BackupBuddy.
- ✓ **Check for Broken Links** - Many links within your posts will still work even months and years from today. But some of them will not. When that happens, it reflects badly on you. To avoid broken link issues, scan your site for broken ones and whenever possible, replace your old links with new resources.
- ✓ **Check Your Ads** - If you are running ads on your site, get into habit of checking what ads are showing up on your site and that they are relevant and more importantly are not offensive in nature.
- ✓ **Check Your RSS Feeds** - Make sure your RSS feeds are working properly. It is best to check on several different RSS clients as sometimes feeds can work in one reader but not another.

- ✓ **Review Your About Page** - Is your About page up to date? If anything about you, your blog, or any other content on your About page has changed since you published it, then you should update it.
- ✓ **Test Your Forms** - If you have any forms on your blog, be sure to test them to ensure that they are functioning correctly. This is particularly important for your blog's contact form. If you use third-party plugins or tools to create and manage forms on your blog, make sure you always keep them updated with the latest upgrades and fixes.
- ✓ **Delete Spam and Trash Comments** - Clean out your comments by deleting spam and trash comments. These can add up quickly so make sure deleting them is part of your ongoing blog maintenance.
- ✓ **Clean up Your Sidebars** – Regularly assess that all the elements in your blog's sidebar are still timely, useful, and relevant. Keep it clean and useful by deleting irrelevant elements and placing the best content in a prominent position.

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# FACEBOOK

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Facebook is the largest and most active social network, with over 2.7 billion active users sharing more than more than 2.5 billion pieces of content per day. Businesses have utilised the benefits of Facebook, recognising that its easy-to-use interface, impressive Ad targeting options and extensive potential for user engagement makes it a fundamental tool in their marketing efforts. Perhaps the greatest feature of Facebook is the ability for your followers to share your content with their friends at the click of a button and is what cements Facebook as a successful word-of-mouth platform that can help your message reach an entirely new audience of prospective customers.

## What's good about Facebook?

- The user base is extensive and that means many of your customers and competitors may already be there
- It is compatible with any type of multimedia content meaning you can post videos, photos, and links to external content
- You can separate your personal and professional use

## What's not so good about Facebook?

- It's a closed environment, although anyone can find your page, only Facebook users can 'Like' your business to receive your updates
- Facebook and its updates are moving closer to being a pay-only marketing platform to gain results therefore it can be extremely difficult to get your content seen by fans without paying

## Which Businesses Should be on Facebook?

The sheer scale of Facebook's audience and its position as one of the most powerful social networks make it a must consider for any business.

## Need to Know Facts, Stats and Tips about Facebook

- Users access Facebook an average of eight times per day.
- Each day, 35 million people update their statuses on Facebook.

- The average Facebook user is separated from another given user by just 3.57 degrees of separation.
- 42% of Facebook customer service responses happen during the first 60 minutes.
- More than 100 million Facebook users belong to meaningful communities—groups aimed at helping users such as new parents.
- Thursdays and Fridays between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. are considered by many to be the best times to post on Facebook.
- The most effective length for an ad title on Facebook is four words—15 words for a link description.
- Images account for 75-90% of Facebook Ad performance.
- 26% of Facebook users who clicked on ads reported making a purchase.
- 83% of women and 75% of men use Facebook.
- 83% of Facebook users worldwide are under the age of 45.
- As of January 2017, men aged 18-24 make up the highest percentage of Facebook users by both age and gender, at 18%.
- Facebook is the preferred social platform of supermarket shoppers—89% use it.
- Facebook gets over 8 billion average daily video views.
- People are 1.5 times more likely to watch video daily on a smartphone than on desktop.
- One in five Facebook videos is now a live broadcast.
- Videos earn the highest engagement rate, despite making up only 3% of content.
- In Facebook News Feed, people consume a given piece of content faster on mobile than on desktop.
- 19% of time spent on mobile devices occurs on Facebook.
- Over 2.5 trillion posts have been created on Facebook.
- 42% of Facebook fans “like” a page with the aim of getting a coupon or discount.
- Facebook is the second favourite platform for consuming videos after YouTube. 40% of consumers said that they watch the most videos on Facebook.
- 83% pay for ads on Facebook.
- The number of local business pages on Facebook has reached 65 million.
- Total Number of Monthly Active Users: 2.072 billion
- Total Number of Mobile Monthly Active Users: 1.66 billion
- Total Number of Desktop Daily Active Users: 1.368 billion
- Total number of Mobile Daily Active Users: 1.57 billion
- Facebook users are 53% female and 47% male.
- Average Facebook user has 155 “friends”.
- 56% of online Seniors aged 65+ are on Facebook and 63% are between age 50-64.
- 87% of online users of age 18-29 are on Facebook.
- More than 40 million small businesses have active pages
- A post’s average organic reach is only around 6.4% of the Page’s total likes
- 47% of Facebook users only access the site through the mobile app
- Videos with auto-playing sound annoy 80% of users
- Your video ad has about three seconds to capture viewer attention
- Shorter posts get about 23% more interaction than longer Facebook posts
- Video posts get more shares than any other post type.



# Why You Need Facebook for Your Business

Facebook has an extensive global reach, making it an invaluable platform for businesses to grow brand awareness. Almost two thirds of Facebook users decide to follow a brand page after making a purchase, making Facebook a great tool in your marketing arsenal. It encourages users to recommend and invite their own friends to 'like' business pages that they themselves have had rewarding experiences with, opening your business up to a potential audience of active users that has now surpassed two billion.

## ***Connect With Customers and Strengthen Relationships***

You will be able to connect with your customers because it is likely that they themselves are using Facebook. When a user likes your page or comments on a post, they are showing that they want a relationship with your business. This gives you an invaluable opportunity to listen to and find out about your customers, demonstrate your customer service skills, share your valuable and informative news, offer incentives and exclusive rewards for loyal Facebook customers. You can also use it as a channel for gaining feedback from your customers on how you can improve your product, services, and your customer service, all of which can greatly help your business in the future.

## ***Raise Awareness Through "Likes"***

The Facebook 'Like' button can be seen everywhere from packaging to TV advertisements and has become a fundamental tool in the marketing efforts of businesses. Whenever a user interacts with your page by liking or sharing your content this action could get published to their friends and 'snowball' to more from there resulting in excellent exposure for your brand and goes a long way towards increasing your brand awareness. Through sharing and promoting great and valuable content that encourages interaction, you are deepening existing customer relationships at the same time as potentially creating and attracting new ones, therefore making every post an invaluable opportunity to generate awareness and attention for your business.

## ***It Shows Your Personality***

The internet can often be an impersonal place, but having a business Facebook page offers an informal and chatty platform for your opinions, stories, humour and advice that gives you an opportunity to attach a face, name and personality to your brand. Having a Facebook page also allows you to create genuine social connections with your audience and as you share your brand story with others and enjoy interaction and conversation it allows others to see the human side of your business helping you create richer, more human relationships.

### ***You Can Build a Community on Your Page***

Facebook pages can work as excellent hubs for creating a community of customers, prospects and other businesses. As you continually post consistent, valuable and informative content you will be rewarded with a rich (and very beneficial for you!) community that will share their reviews, opinions, raise queries and offer feedback all of which can greatly help your business in the future. By encouraging engagement in this way, you help your business build a reputation based on loyal followers making your page and brand more attractive to others.

### ***Still not convinced? Here are 8 more reasons why you need a Facebook Page***

- ✓ Provides increased exposure for both your website and your brand.
- ✓ Provides website traffic by way of content sharing.
- ✓ Facilitates lead generation.
- ✓ Improves your search engine rankings.
- ✓ Free to use, though paid advertising opportunities are also available.
- ✓ Offers valuable insights into your marketplace and your competitors.
- ✓ Allows you to communicate directly with your audience.
- ✓ Allows you to create and promote company events.

## **Creating Your Facebook Page and Getting to Grips with The Basic Lingo**

Creating a Facebook page is very straightforward. You can either go to the top navigation bar and click the flag button to find the Create a Page option or head straight to [facebook.com/pages/create](https://facebook.com/pages/create). Both options lead you to a page directing you to the first three fundamentals you need to create a page, Name, Category and Description.

From there after you fill in these initial details, you will then be prompted to enter basic business information like your business address and your phone number. Once the required information has been filled out, click Create Page to continue the process. This will lead to a page where you will be prompted to fill in the rest of your page information.

- **Upload Your Profile Picture & Cover Photo** Next, choose a photo to upload as your business page profile picture. Businesses commonly use their logo as a profile picture, but you may choose to use any photo that represents your business. Be sure that your image is clear, good quality and does not get cropped. A cover photo is the background image that appears on your Facebook Business Page, similar to your personal Facebook account. You want your cover photo to be visually appealing and representative of your business. If you are having trouble finding a

cover image, you can create one for free using a tool such as Canva. It includes many Facebook cover templates that you can easily customize without any graphic design skills.

**Your Page's profile picture:** Displays at 170x170 pixels on your Page on computers, 128x128 pixels on smartphones and 36x36 pixels on most feature phones.

**Your Page's cover photo:** Displays at 820 pixels wide by 312 pixels tall on your Page on computers and 640 pixels wide by 360 pixels tall on smartphones. Must be at least 400 pixels wide and 150 pixels tall.

For profile pictures and cover photos with your logo or text, you may get a better result by using a PNG file. Keep in mind that your Page's profile picture will be cropped to a circular shape in ads and posts, but will remain the same square shape when people visit your Page.

- **Invite Friends to Like Your Page** Facebook will prompt you to invite your current Facebook friends from your personal account to like your new business page. Existing Facebook friends can provide a good initial base of likes for a new Facebook Business Page, so it is advised to go ahead and do this.
- **Include Additional Business Details** This is where you will input information that tells readers all about your business, from how to contact you to your products or menu. Enter all relevant information, such as your website, hours, and contact information. Facebook pages show up high in search results so it is important to complete all information, as it may be a potential customer's first point of reference for your business.
- **Add a Call to Action Button to Your Page** After you have input all of your above important information, you will want to add a button to your page, which will appear in the top right-hand of your business page below your cover photo. This acts as your Facebook page's call-to-action (CTA) and is free to use. Including a relevant one to your business can help generate more leads, and in return, increase sales. Call-to-action buttons can direct your customers to contact you through Messenger or email or by phone or website, to your Facebook Shop, to Start food orders or to Book a service. Select the button type that best suits your business. For example, a Hair salon would likely want to use the Book with You option, whereas a brand selling products would find the Shop option a better fit.

*You can skip these steps at any time, if you'd prefer to fill them out later.*

## **Templates & Tabs: The Foundation of Your Facebook Business Page**

Facebook is very good at optimising the whole social media experience and helping business owners get the most out of their page. One feature, Templates, allows you to customize your Page even further by letting you configure what you want your Page to have and what you want it to look like. There are several templates available to Facebook Business Page owners, all of which affect the Page layout and call-to-action buttons. The goal of the templates is to make it easier for businesses to get the right information and content in front of their customers.

Tabs are essentially different sections of your Page, such as your posts, your photos, reviews of your business, etc. You can decide which tabs you want on your Page and their order on your Page.

Each template has a default CTA button and tabs, which you can preview by clicking "View Details". Here are the various templates:

- **Shopping**

- **Business**
- **Venues**
- **Movies**
- **Non-profit**
- **Politicians**
- **Services**
- **Restaurants & Cafes**
- **Video Page**
- **Standard**

If the templates don't fit your business perfectly you can turn off the default tabs and then rearrange and turn specific tabs off or on in the settings. Here are the possible tabs:

- **Offers** – Lists current offers for your business
- **Services** – Gives you a space to highlight the services you offer
- **Shop** – Shows the products you want to feature
- **Reviews** – Shows reviews on your Page and allows people to write reviews
- **Photos** – Shows photos posted on your Page
- **Posts** – Shows your Page posts
- **Videos** – Shows videos posted on your Page
- **Live Videos** – Shows live videos about your page
- **Events** – Lists your upcoming events
- **About** – Lists information about your Page
- **Notes** – Gives you a space to highlight notes on your Page
- **Community** – Lists your friends that have liked your Page
- **Groups** – Lists the groups that you've linked to this Page
- **Info and Ads** – Shows ads that you're running via the Page

***When you first create your page, Facebook will give you a pop-up tutorial of how to navigate it. It is worth reading each information box, so you can get a better idea of how to get around and utilize your page.***

**General:** This is where you can change many of the basic settings of your Facebook page.

- You can publish or unpublish your page with the Page Visibility setting
- Choose whether you'd like other Facebook users to be able to post to your page's wall with the Visitor Posts setting
- Turn on or off News Feed Audience and Visibility for Posts, which allows you to control which specific demographics see your posts and which don't.
- Turn on or off the ability for other Facebook users to message your page privately, and if you want other users to be able to tag your photos and videos.
- Other settings include the ability to restrict your page by country and age, block specific words from appearing on your page (like inappropriate remarks in the comments)

- Turn on a profanity filter and turn comment ranking on, making top liked comments show first, instead of new ones
- You can also turn on Similar Page Suggestions, which will recommend your page to users who view pages similar to yours.
- Facebook also gives you the option to download your page's information, merge duplicate pages and to delete your page if you choose to do so.

**Messaging:** This option allows you to turn on Instant Replies, which allows you to send an automatic response to anyone who messages you. Here you can also tell users who message your page what your typical response time is (which you select yourself), so they know how long to expect to wait before they hear back.

**Post Attribution:** This is where you can decide if you would like posts made to your page to be credited to your page or to yourself. This is just a default setting and can be changed on a post-by-post basis. If you choose to post as your page, those posts will show up as posts on the page's timeline for everyone to see. If you choose to post as yourself, these posts will show up in the Posts to Page section as if you were posting on someone else's timeline.

**Notifications:** This section allows you to set up what kinds of notifications you would like to receive about your page. By default, Facebook turns all notifications on, and sends you an email each time you get a notification. You can choose to turn off email notifications if you would rather view them on your page and not have your notifications fill up your inbox. Or you can turn off notifications for specific events — like user check-ins, likes and more — if you prefer not to get a notification for everything.

**Page Roles:** If you have multiple employees running your Facebook page, this section is where you can add them to your page and adjust how much control you want them to have over it. There are five different roles you can assign to each person: Admin, Editor, Moderator, Advertiser and Analyst.

- **Admin** allows that person to manage and change any and all aspects of the page.
- **Editor** role gives them the power to edit the page, send messages, make posts and view insights, but not assign other users page roles.
- **Moderators** can respond to and delete comments on your page, as well as send messages as your page, view insights and create ads, but they can't create posts.
- **Advertisers** can only create ads and view insights, and **Analysts** can view insights.

The roles you assign to employees depend on what their jobs entail and what level of access they need in order to achieve their goals.

**People and Other Pages:** Here, you can see the full list of every person who has liked your page, as well as other pages that have liked your page and users you have banned from your page.

**Preferred Page Audience:** This option allows you to edit and update the Preferred Page Audience information you filled out when you created your page.

**Apps:** There are many apps available from Facebook and other developers that can help you add an extra dimension to your page. In this section Facebook will suggest apps that may be useful for your page, such as Facebook Events. You can also manage individual settings for each app that you have added by clicking Edit Settings under the app you want to change. You can also click Go to App to view it on your page or click Link to this Tab to copy the link specifically to that section of your page for sharing purposes.

**Instagram Ads:** This is where you can connect your business's Instagram account if you have one so that you can run paid ads on Instagram and automatically cross post on the platforms if you choose to.

**Featured:** Here you can add other pages you've liked to your page's Featured Likes section. This is a great way to show off your business partners or suggest pages that are similar to yours. You can also add/display a featured page owner, which is useful if you want your followers to know that you (or one of your employees) is the person running your page.

**Page Support:** If you have reported technical issues to Facebook from your page, this is where you can check the status of those reports.

**Activity Log:** This is where you can view all your page activity such as the things you have posted, searched for and more.

The **Help** button also pulls up a drop-down menu where you can access the Facebook Help Centre, go to the Facebook Help Community to ask a question, and send feedback to Facebook.

## Personalising Your Page

Personalising your Facebook page is simple. Head to your page and click the About tab where you can fill out all of your basic business information, so customers and followers know what your business is and where to find you.

### *Example – Local Business*

If you created your page as a local business, you'll see two options under About: Overview and Page Info. In the Overview section, you'll see basic information about your business, like your hours, price range, address, phone number and website. The Overview section will also show your business's location on a map, as long as your address is filled out. To fill out or change any of this information, go to the Page Info tab.

Under the Page Info tab, you'll be able to fill out and/or edit the following information:

- **Category:** This is the category you chose when you created your page (in this case, "local business or place"), so this will already be filled out. However, you can edit it if you made a mistake or think another category better suits your business.
- **Name:** This is your business's name. You can edit it if you made a mistake.
- **Subcategories:** As with your business category, this is the subcategory or subcategories that you filled out when you created your page.
- **Facebook Web Address:** Here, you can create a username or vanity URL for your Facebook page. When you do this, the URL to your page will be in the `www.facebook.com/YourUsernameHere` format, rather than a long collection of words, letters and numbers. That makes your page a lot easier to share, and even something that can easily fit on a business card. This is an important step in setting up your Facebook page, but make sure you're careful — once you've set your username, you can only change it one more time before it becomes permanent.
- **Address:** Here, you can add or change your business's address.
- **Start Info:** This section allows you to highlight when you started your business. Choose Born, Founded, Started, Opened, Created or Launched from the drop-down menu, and then add the date by clicking Add Year.
- **Hours:** Here, you can set your company's hours by choosing from a list of four options: "No hours available," "Always open," "Permanently closed" and "Open for selected hours."
- **Short Description:** This is where you'll enter a short description of your business (fewer than 155 characters) that will appear below your profile picture on your page.
- **Impressum:** This is where you can enter a statement of ownership on your Web presence (up to 2,000 characters), which may be required of your business by law, depending on where your business is located.
- **Long Description:** Here, you can expand on your short description by adding more details about your business, how it started, what you do and any other details you'd like your audience to know.

- **General Information:** In this section, you can also enter any other basic details you think visitors to your page should know.
- **Price Range:** Enter the price range for your products or services here, by selecting either Unspecified or one of the following options from lowest to highest: £, ££, £££ or ££££.
- **Parking:** In this section, you can check off the types of parking available to your customers from any of these three options: Street, Parking Lot or Valet.
- **Public Transit:** If there are public transit options nearby, here is where you can let visitors know how to get to your business.
- **Phone:** Here, you can add or edit your phone number.
- **Email:** Here, you can add your email address where customers can reach you.
- **Website:** You can enter or edit your company's website in this section.
- **Official Page:** This option is only necessary to fill out if your page is not run as an official representation of your brand. This is more common when creating fan pages. In most cases, you can leave this blank.
- **Facebook Page ID:** Here, you'll see your Facebook Page ID number. This information can't be changed but may be necessary to fill in when you're using other apps on Facebook.

### ***Changing your Profile and Cover Photo***

Along with updating your business's information, you'll need to upload a profile picture and a cover photo. To upload a profile picture, simply click Add Photo in the profile picture box, and then click Upload Photo. To add a cover photo, click the small camera button right above the profile picture box. You can either upload an image or choose from a photo you've already uploaded to your page.

Your Page's profile picture displays at 170x170 pixels on your Page on computers, 128x128 pixels on smartphones and 36x36 pixels on most feature phones.

Your Page's cover photo displays at 820 pixels wide by 312 pixels tall on your Page on computers and 640 pixels wide by 360 pixels tall on smartphones. Must be at least 400 pixels wide and 150 pixels tall.

### ***Posting to Your Facebook Page***

Posting to your Facebook page is almost exactly the same as posting on your personal profile. But instead of seeing the Status option, you'll see Post, and the Create Album and Life Event options are not there. Once you've created your Page, make your first post to engage your audience. For a quick idea this can be a welcome post. You want to convince your audience to like and follow you. Create a welcome post that includes details about your business and why people should like your Page. Provide information about what you'll share, like special offers, updates about your business and more.

*After you create your welcome post, you can pin it to the top of your Page so that it's the first thing people see when they visit. The pinned post remains at the top of your Page until you change or remove it.*



## ***Using Facebook as your Page or Profile***

Facebook Pages allow admins to post content and respond to comments as the Page or as a profile. This gives the page admins the flexibility to express both the brand voice and their personal voice. This valuable feature when used strategically can expand your reach and engagement and develop a stronger brand voice.

- ✓ **Comment on a Facebook Page From Your Personal Profile**

You may want to post and comment as your Facebook Page on your own Page, that's fine.

There is the option however if you want to, to reply to fans using your own profile. A response from a person—rather than a brand—can help a business seem real by putting a “face” behind a response. Each post on your Page has a small icon at the bottom right. Click on the icon and you can immediately see the account you're using to comment - and switch accounts in a second. That drop-down is post-specific, meaning you can choose to comment for a specific post as yourself without affecting any others.

- ✓ **Join a Facebook Group as Your Profile or Your Page**

Another way to comment on a Facebook Page as your Page is through Groups. When you request to join a Facebook Group, you can either join as your personal profile or as your Page. When you request “Join Group” you can select which account you want to join with. Note, you have to be the admin on a page to be able to join group as it.

- ✓ **Connect Your Group to Your Facebook Page**

If you have created a Facebook group, then connecting it to your Facebook Page can help you grow both. Within the settings of your group, you will see the option to link an existing Facebook page. You will have the option to keep your business group and business page separate from your personal life. If multiple group admins have Facebook Pages, they can each link their Pages and interact as those Pages within the group. In a group, it shows you at the top of the left sidebar how you are interacting in the group. This setting will stay the same unless you change it by clicking on it and selecting a new account to interact from. You can post new content as your Page and interact with posts. When people interact with your Page through your group, you can also invite them to like your Page, even if you are not personal friends. This is a great way to start building new likes on your Page!

- ✓ **Comment on Other Pages**

You can also comment on other pages as your page. You'll see your personal profile icon at the bottom right of each Page's post. Click on the drop-down arrow to the right of your profile pic, and choose the account you want to speak from for that particular post. You are not just limited to commenting on other pages as your page, you will be interested to know that your page has its own Facebook feed timeline! Scroll down until you see “See Pages Feed” on the right-hand side of your page to access this feature. Once you open up your feed, you will see where you can easily find other Pages to like as your page. This is a very useful feature as you can like other pages to build awareness among your network and to build relationships with brands or influencers you'd like to work with. You could start by liking other pages that; share a similar audience and a non-competing product or service, share content that you might want to share with your audience or Potential partners' or associates' Pages.

## ***Trending Topics on Facebook***

On your news feed, you'll be able to see the top trending topics on the right-hand side of your screen. This is very useful as you can take advantage of trending topics if they're relevant to your business. For instance, if you run a bookstore, and a certain book is suddenly trending on Facebook, mentioning it in a post will allow your page to show up when users click on that particular trending topic.

## ***What do you do once you've created a Page?***

### **✓ Publish Content**

Your Page should be active and informative before you start promoting it, so start posting updates as soon as it is live. New photos and updates help to keep your Page fresh for visitors.

**Posts:** You can post pictures, videos, polls and milestones to engage with your customers.

**Stories:** Similar to Instagram Stories, Page Stories let you share pictures and short videos. Use Stories to bring your audience behind the scenes.

### **✓ Start Messaging**

Let people send your business private messages to ask questions and get in touch. Facebook Messenger is integrated with your Page, so you can connect with customers one to one. Inbox puts all of your communication in one place so you won't miss connections with potential customers.

**Messenger:** Use Messenger to reach people at scale, then continue to interact with them individually.

**Instagram Direct:** Communicate directly with people interested in your business on Instagram.

**Comments:** Inbox includes comments from your Facebook Page and Instagram account (if connected). If you select a comment, you can see which post or picture it references.

### **✓ Add Special Features**

To make your Page more useful for people, you can also add special content to your Facebook Page, such as displaying your menu, listing your services or showcasing your products with a shop section.

**Groups:** Groups provide a space to communicate with a select group of people who care about your products and services. Use groups to connect over shared interests and start discussions. You can join or create a group as a Page.

**Appointments:** If you are a local service provider, you can let customers book appointments directly on Facebook. You can also use this tool to see appointment records and manage your calendar.

**Events:** Events can help you get your promotion, like a sale or new product release, on someone's calendar. When one of your followers marks that they're interested in your upcoming event, Facebook will remind them the day of.

**Jobs:** This free tool helps you reach and hire the best candidates. You can manage all of your job postings from one place on your Page.

**Shops:** The Facebook shop tool helps you share your inventory or services with customers and simplify the buying process, all from one location. Your audience can buy directly from their desktop or mobile device.

### ✓ **Promote your Page**

Once your Page has been set up and filled up with content and the above special features, invite your customers and contacts to connect with you there to get in touch and like your page. You can also run ads to find brand-new followers.

### ✓ **Amend Your Settings**

Clicking the **Settings** option will take you to a page where you can fill out key information about your page and change your page's settings. Note that these settings are completely separate from your personal settings. When you arrive on the settings page, you'll see a menu with several options:

## **Checklist for Developing a Clear and Effective Facebook Strategy**

### ***Determine Your Facebook Business Objectives***

One of the first things you must do is determine what you want your Facebook Page to achieve for your business. Whether you want to use it to drive more traffic to your website, promote your events or use it as an outlet to build your brand by engaging your community, having clear objectives for your page helps optimise its reach and impact and is crucial as you later come to measure your success. So before anything else you must ensure you have clearly defined objectives that are realistic and achievable for your business.

### ***Common Facebook Marketing Objectives;***

- Increase Brand Exposure and Awareness
- Create a Loyal and Engaged Community
- Generate Leads/ Sales

### ***Define Your Target Audience, Are They Using Facebook?***

In addition to determining your objectives, having a clear idea of your target readers and if they are themselves using Facebook is key. If you do find your target audience is active on Facebook, then you can tailor your posts effectively around content that maximises interest and engagement from your readers. It is also important to consider how your demographic behaves on social media whether they are people who actively comment or can be described as lurkers, as posts can then be tailored accordingly in order to maximise your potential for impact and engagement.

### ***Do Your Research***

Conducting research before you start using Facebook for business is fundamental to a successful presence. Your Facebook research should include these several key areas;

- ***Identify your Target Audience*** - You will need to know important factors such as where they spend their time online, how they like to digest content and other general demographics.
- ***Research your Competition*** - Find out what is and isn't working for your competition on Facebook, find out what they do well and what they don't and then apply it to your own strategy.
- ***Understand the Latest Techniques*** - Make sure you are aware of the latest updates, trends and techniques on Facebook so that you can keep your page up to date, competitive and effective.
- ***Case Studies*** - Compile examples of businesses that are similar to you and have thriving Facebook pages, look at what they do well, what their audience responds well to and other important factors that you can apply to your own efforts.
- ***Facebook's Future News, Updates and Projections*** - Ensure you track Facebook's trends and updates as they regularly change so you need to keep your business up to date and effective.

### ***Who is Going to Manage Your Page?***

Whether you yourself are going to maintain your page or you are considering hiring an external consultant or agency, you need to clearly establish the person who will be running your page and ensure that they are equipped with the right knowledge and experience to know how to effectively maintain and run a page that is representative of your business and will become a valuable asset to your marketing efforts.

### ***How are you Going to Promote Your Page?***

You need to consider how you are going to promote your page and build awareness of it which involves you having to utilise all your relevant assets that you have available. Everything from your website, e-newsletter, corporate literature, blog, word of mouth to signage and business cards present an opportunity for you to advertise and promote your page. So be clear on what tools and assets you are going to use to help successfully drive traffic to your page.

### ***Have you Got a Clear Content Strategy? How Often Will You Post?***

Deciding on what major content categories you want to include regularly helps you to stay focused and maintains a clear direction for your posts to ensure your content is in line with your business goals and is targeting reader's needs. Part of this process is to also determine how often you will post on your page as having a clear schedule of when you will be posting is paramount in order to ensure it is in line with your wider social media strategy. Creating content that people will interact with takes some thought and scheduling. Your first priority should always be to create content that your audience is interested in so look to experiment to find out the most effective content strategy and share a variety of different types of posts, at different times during the day and in different quantities. Through this initial experimentation you will find out valuable information that will guide your future strategy from what content resonates best with your audience, to the times they are most active on Facebook.

### ***What is the Corporate Character of Your Page?***

Defining the corporate character of your page has a crucial part to play in how successful your Facebook strategy will be as it is here that you will outline and determine how you are going to present yourself to your audience. This consideration involves establishing a clear vision of every aspect of your page from what your brand values are and how you will get them across, what tone of voice you will present, how you will apply your branding to the creative aspects of your page right through to the type of messages that you will be sharing.

- ***Develop Your Facebook Voice*** - it is important to have an idea of what voice you want for your page that can be consistently applied across all your posts, especially if your business page is going to be managed by several different contributors. Put simply, avoid generic corporate speak and replace it with your own unique voice and customers will be more drawn to and engage with your page.
- ***Outline Creative Elements*** - Consistency should also be applied to the creative aspects of your Facebook page and overall presentation including the colour scheme and typography of any graphics you create and share. By setting consistent guidelines over the presentation and integration of your branding into your page it ensures that your page stays in line with your overall branding and helps reinforce your message across all social media platforms.

## Posting on Your Wall: What, and How Often?

***Now it's time to start posting, there are several fundamental basics to follow to ensure you create a powerful and engaging post.*** With over 60 million Facebook business pages out there it can be hard to make your page and posts stand out from the crowd. For small businesses without an already established brand this is an even more difficult task to manage. There are however several guidelines available to aid you in what to post, but always remember these four key things;

### ***Never Go For the Direct Sell***

When you first start posting it may be tempting to go with the direct sale approach posting information about how wonderful your business is and all of the things you sell or offer. You must avoid doing this as it is not a successful approach and, in most cases, will see you viewed as a spammer and will quickly lead to people avoiding your page and not becoming fans. To avoid making this mistake you must strike a balance between subtle business posts and ones centred on customer engagement, with a very favourable emphasis on the latter.

### ***Try to Include Some Form of Media Within Your Posts***

Not including some form of media content such as a relevant video or picture is a common Facebook mistake as it makes posts look uninviting and will not capture a reader's attention. To avoid making this mistake make sure to post insightful and valuable content that your readers will want to read and looks visually appealing also. Posts with some form of media such as a photo or link always get more clicks, so it is vital that you try to include some form of relevant media.

### ***Say Something Interesting and Useful***

Write your posts with your target audience in mind so rather than trying to appeal to a generic wider audience, provide content that contains specialised information and analysis that those interested in your services or in your sector would read. By openly giving out advice and information you will become a key figure in your industry and this will attract the attention of your target audience.

### ***Be Creative***

People always respond better to something that is new, fresh and clever so always brainstorm ideas in the mind-set of producing something that is creative and breaks the mould of other generic posts. You are competing in the fast-paced and growing industry of social media marketing, so you need to make yourself stand out and give potential customers a compelling reason to choose you over your competitors.

## Types of Facebook Posts

So, you've created your Facebook Page, now you need to think about what kind of content to post. Here is a breakdown of the different post types you can use to engage with your followers.

- **Facebook Text Status**

This is the most basic type of Facebook post. It is literally nothing but text. A text-only post can be used to spark engagement on your Page by asking a question etc.

- **Facebook Photo Post**

In general, photo posts see much higher engagement than text posts so you should look to include an image whenever possible. Photo posts are a great way to show off your products, alternately if you sell something less tangible, stock photos can also be useful. It's worth noting that the "photo" in your post doesn't have to be a photo at all, it could be any kind of image such as an infographic, illustration, or any other visual.

- **Facebook Video Post**

Videos on Facebook start to play automatically in the News Feed, so even a clip that's only a few seconds long can be a great way to catch someone's eye. Short videos can be great for announcements and polls and longer video posts are a better for an ongoing series or sharing memorable content.

- **Facebook Live Video Post**

Facebook Live video is a video broadcast live on Facebook. It can be a great way to give followers a behind-the-scenes look at your company or products or to share announcements in real time. Since the launch of live in 2016, more than two billion people have watched a Facebook Live video.

- **Link Posts**

A linked content post is a post that links to content outside of Facebook. These get more engagement than status posts, but less than photo or video posts. Link posts are easy to create, all you need to do is copy and paste a link into the status box. Facebook automatically populates the meta description and photo. Make sure to add some extra text to tell readers why they should click through. In addition to linking through to your own content, you could also share content from other thought leaders in your industry.

- **Facebook Stories**

Facebook Stories are photo or short video posts that appear in vertical format and disappear after 24 hours. They live at the top of the News Feed. Photos appear for five seconds, and videos can be up to 20 seconds long. Stories can offer a powerful way to connect with fans and more than half a billion people view Facebook Stories every day.

- **Pinned Post**

A pinned post is simply a regular post that you "pin" to the top of your Facebook Page. It's always the first thing people see at the top of your Page so make sure it's something that shows potential followers exactly why they should Like your Page. Some popular examples include sharing important news, showcasing an amazing video or raising awareness about a current campaign. You can tell a post is pinned if you see a little blue thumbtack icon on the top right of the post.

## How to Choose The Perfect Type of Post

So, with all the choices how do you know what types of post to use? One of the best ways to learn what might resonate with your audience is to engage in social listening. This can help you learn:

- What existing customers love about your company or your products?
- What challenges are people facing that you know your product could help them solve?
- How can you differentiate yourself from the competition?

Start by posting content that's performing well on other networks. Have you tweeted content that's getting a great response? Share it on Facebook, too. For the best results, be sure to share your content using cross-promotion best practices, rather than simply cross-posting.

*Engagement on Facebook is reflected in five forms: likes, shares, clicks, comments and reactions. Here are several ways to create the right type of customer engagement with your posts.*

### ***The Photo Post***

A picture is one of the simplest ways to catch someone's attention, as it is more visually appealing than the average post. For ideas you can provide links to photographs of your employees, offices, celebrations, etc. Similarly, posting a photo and asking fans to come up with a caption is a common and successful way of encouraging fan interaction and engagement. When it comes to brands, a familiar image is also key and can be as simple as including your business logo or a face that is tied to your brand on your images.

### ***The Fill in the Blank Post***

Fill-in-the-blank posts are great at encouraging engagement. The blanks are essentially platforms for people to share their creativity and often gather fun and short comments, which then encourage your audience to interact.

### ***The Question Post***

You will get a lot more out of Facebook if you enable and encourage your customers to respond to what you write. Beyond asking questions with your posts, you also need to remember the conversation is two-way, so respond to the comments readers leave and you are likely to develop a community on your page that can help turn your customers into fans who will promote your products and services and provide you with quality feedback.



### ***The Tips Post***

Successful posts often deliver something valuable to the reader, whether that is entertainment or information. A tip is engaging because it gives value to your audience and therefore makes them more likely to interact.

### ***The Promotion/Discount/Incentive Post***

By giving discounts or other benefits to your Facebook fans, you give them a reason to follow you and you get a captive audience for other business messaging. Common promotions offer a free gift or service upon receiving a certain number of likes. Facebook however has stringent rules when running a contest, so always consult these rules before you choose to run yours.

### ***The Fun Post***

Ensure you show your personality and inject a bit of humour into your page and posts and you will attract attention and show your brand has a personality. Strike a balance between business related posts and fun, humoured ones as you need to remember people come to businesses on Facebook to not only be informed and educated but also to be entertained.

### ***The On Trend Post***

Utilising relevant events/ observances and occurrences that are on trend is a great way to attract attention to your page. Seek out relevant trending topics and find a way for your business to join in with and share content relating to them.

### ***The Quote Post***

Quotes are one of the easiest and most popular ways to get likes and shares on Facebook. They tend to get more interaction compared to comments because quotes are often inspirational, making it personal in nature and thus showing a more human side to your brand that people are drawn to and appreciate.

### ***The "Behind the Scenes" Post***

Sharing behind-the-scenes content helps your audience to know more about you and also works towards humanising your brand.

### ***The "Personalised Encouragement" Post***

Your fans will be thrilled if you show respect and appreciation by devoting time to interact with them. Craft a short message and give your fans words of encouragement when they announce major

milestones (such as a new baby, running a marathon, getting married or purchasing a first home). You can make the message more personal if you don't use any hashtags.

### ***The "Problem-Solving" Post***

Grab your audience's attention by providing valuable content that will help improve their lives. To identify what content might be valuable to your audience, read through their profiles to discover their likes, dislikes and current influences and select a common issue that they're dealing with then create content that presents a solution to their problem and promote it. Be careful to avoid creating content that is merely disguised selling tactics however as customers will quickly notice your deception. Rather than sell to them, aim to educate your followers by posting information that they'll find valuable. This is a great way to integrate your brand into their lifestyles and build more genuine customer relationships.

### ***The "Customer Service" Post***

If you offer customer service through your company's Facebook account, it's important to respond to customer concerns in a timely manner. Helping to quickly solve their queries/complaints is a great way to provide good customer service and at the same time strengthen customer relationships. Be sure to state your customer service hours of operation in your profile as if you don't people may assume a service representative is available 24/7.

### ***The 'Video' Post***

Embedded media helps keep visitors on pages longer. Videos are a great visual tool to show your personality so be creative. For example, you can post videos of employees working on a project, videos that relate to your services or products, a behind the scenes clip or something fun such as a video with you at work with your office dog.

### ***The 'Educational' Post***

Content that gets shared the most is content that has valuable information about solutions to problems. If you want to build a loyal following, provide solutions to their problems in a genuine and non-promotional way.

### ***The 'Asking Advice' Post***

Pose and problem and ask for advice. This type of Facebook post idea is great as people love to answer questions, provide their opinions and help solve problems. You can also approach it from a different angle and ask a question that may also help them with a problem, they will be grateful for the help. Some ideas include:

- What would you do if...?

- I need to make a decision and am looking for your feedback....
- What advice would you offer to a person who is struggling with...?
- One of our readers has a question. Can you help?

### ***The 'Follow Friday' Post***

On a Friday, share a Follow Friday post that allows your fans to add a link to their website/business page in the comments. This is a popular post as it gives your fans the chance to showcase their business or products, but they can meet new people and make new connections.

### ***The 'Seasonal' Post***

Help humanise your brand by taking advantage of upcoming seasonal trends. This can be as simple as sharing a holiday picture, quote or greeting, changing your cover photo, and providing seasonal tips relating to your product/service.

### ***The 'Blog Excerpts' Post***

Whether you have found an external blog article that your fans will find valuable or it is your own latest blog post, when you share it be sure to include a backstory or short excerpt from the post so your fans know what to expect when they click on the link.

### ***The 'Fan-Only' Discount Post***

Offer your Facebook fans an exclusive discount, just for being a fan. This goes a long way towards rewarding loyal customers and attracting new ones. Be sure to use an image to promote the discount as this will help grab the attention of your fans and help in getting more shares.

### ***The Cross-Promotion' Post***

Team up with a business that offers a complimentary product or service and help cross-promote each other. Tag each other in Facebook status posts, recommend that your fans 'like' each other's Pages, or simply share each other's content. The benefit is that you get your content opened up to a wider and potential new audience as well as creating valuable business relationships.

*Although it takes some experimentation to find the best publishing schedule for you, there are two things that should always be considered and will dictate your posting schedule; your business goals and what your audience wants.*

In general, posting 7+ times a week is optimal because it helps maintain good relationships with customers, attract natural search traffic, and avoids customer attrition from posting too often. This however may vary depending on what works best for your company, goals and readers so it is important to experiment to find a posting schedule that works for you. For example, if your goal is to become a cutting-edge information resource, you might want to post shorter articles more often or if your main audience is mostly interested in technical or behind-the-scenes details, you'll probably publish longer articles less often. So, the first step to determining your ideal posting frequency is to find the perfect balance of what you want and what your audience wants.

To maximise the benefits of having a Facebook business page you need to ultimately ask yourself, can you keep this schedule consistently? Can you always publish high-quality content at this rate? And will you have enough content for this schedule? Once you have discovered the best times to post, being consistent with your publishing schedule has the benefit of expanding your reach and encourages readers to come back regularly for more.

## How to Create an Effective Facebook Post - Checklist

Every post that you create must be done so with purpose and a clear goal in mind. How successful your post depends on two important factors before you even start writing.

- **Have I Built a Relevant Audience?**

One of the fundamental aspects of whether your Facebook posts and indeed presence is successful depends upon having built an audience that is already interested in what you have to say. A relevant and invested audience is key for your success as those fans are the ones you are trying to target with interesting and valuable content as in doing so you help turn those highly targeted users into brand advocates who genuinely care about you, will interact with you and share your content, helping you to grow your fan base. No matter what any person or article says, having 100 genuine and interested fans is far better than 5,000 fans who never interact with you, share your content or show interest in building a relationship.

- **Have I Utilised Facebook Insights So I Know What My Audience Wants and When the Best Time to Post is?**

Understanding your audience and important aspects about them from their demographics, which types of content they engage with most to the times and days they are mostly online is fundamental to an effective and well performing Facebook post. You can easily find out this information through regularly analysing your analytics, so ensure you are actively looking at this data and then apply it to the content you post. In doing so you ensure your posts are going to be as effective as possible as you have directly targeted and addressed the wants and needs of your audience and will know exactly when to post the content for maximum potential for viewers.

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- ✓ ***Have I Included Visuals?***

Posts that contain visuals such as photos and videos get the highest amount of engagement on Facebook, so you need to actively and consistently incorporate visual elements into your posts. Photos and videos are more visible and take up more space on a user's newsfeed than a simple text-based post so look to include high-quality, eye-catching and relevant visuals and you will find you encourage your audience to become interactive with your page.

- ✓ ***Is the Post Shareable?***

Your main goal when posting something onto your Facebook page is to get your fans to act on it through engagement, sharing and participation. It is widely accepted that posts containing photos, videos and links get shared more often than simply texted based posts, but ultimately none of your posts will get shared by your audience unless they are interesting, valuable and engaging which is what makes them sharable. Before you publish your post ask yourself if you would be willing to share it yourself and if you would not then you need to change it. The key characteristics of sharable posts often have one or more of the following; They are informative, humorous, buck the latest trends/ events, provide a solution to a problem, have an effective and clear call to action or contain an inspirational quote or bit of advice that fans can't help but like and share.

- ✓ ***Is the Post The Right Length?***

Facebook offers you a larger area for content than other social media networks such as Twitter, but this does not mean you should post lengthy content. The key to getting attention with your posts is to keep the length concise and easily digestible for online readers. There is no perfect length size for a post but in general the idea is to make your posts stand out in a user's news feed, so you need to grab their attention with images, good links, solid CTA'S and short, snappy sentences.

- ✓ ***Have I Removed Links from Link Copy?***

This tip is more driven by personal annoyance than necessity, but I recommend removing URLs from a Link Update. If you're already sharing the URL through Facebook's Link Share option, including the URL again in the copy is not only redundant, but also occupying precious update space.

✓ ***Have I Kept my Link Titles <100 Characters?***

When you're uploading a link directly to your News Feed, if the original post has a lengthy title, be sure to click into the title to edit it. Any title above 100 characters gets cut off when posted on your Facebook Business Page, and you don't want the core message to disappear as a result.

✓ ***Have I Experimented with emoticons? :)***

According to AMEX Open Forum, emoticons can impact our posts positively in a few ways:

Posts with emoticons receive a 33% higher share rate.

Posts with emoticons receive a 33% higher comment rate.

Posts with emoticons receive a 57% higher like rate.

With stats like these, it is worth testing the use of emoticons within your posts. If it works then great, if it has no impact then there is no harm done and then at least you will know for future content creation.

✓ ***Does the Post have a Clear Call to Action?***

By including a clear CTA within your posts ensures that every post is working as hard as it for you to get something out of it. Importantly, a CTA doesn't have to be about getting people to buy from you, it can include a wide range of other actions from encouraging people to like or share your post, commenting on it, clicking a link to directing them to a landing page or to one of your other social media platforms. What you want your readers to do is up to you just make sure you tell what to do with a clear, simple and concise CTA.

✓ ***Is the Post Relevant to My Business and Audience?***

With Facebook's continuous updates making it even harder for pages to reach their audience organically, making sure that the content they do see is highly valuable, entertaining and relevant is more important than ever. When it comes to what you post on your page you need to ensure that you stay on topic and only post relevant, high quality and varied content that your audience is interested in.

✓ ***Am I Available to Quickly Respond to Posts?***

Actively watching your posts for audience comments and interaction is just as important as the post itself. You need to be regularly available to respond to the comments you receive and then consciously act on the feedback. By responding to what others write you not only provide good customer service you publicly show your audience that you are genuinely interested in interacting with them and listening to what they have to say about you and your business. There is so much you can learn from becoming sociable with your audience and listening to them and as you become familiar with them more you can then better understand their needs, wants and opinions which you can apply to future content creation and better target their needs and interests.

# A Quick Guide to Facebook Live

## *What is Facebook Live?*

Facebook Live is a live video streaming feature on Facebook that allows you to broadcast real time video out to your audience through your company page or personal profile. Using the camera on a computer or mobile device, live broadcasters can decide who on Facebook can see their video and use this content to engage their audience during the moments that are important to them.

## *How to Use Facebook Live*

If you are on a mobile device or going live from your Facebook profile rather than a Facebook company page, a small button will appear when drafting a post that says, "Live Video." Select it to get started! If you are going live from a Facebook page on your desktop, you'll see a box that says "Live Video" below the post box.

- Give Facebook access to your camera and microphone when prompted.
- Choose your privacy and posting settings.
- Write a compelling description that is direct, actionable and informative. Your description and video thumbnail are the most important pieces of your video. Without compelling copy to entice your viewers, your live video isn't going to get much attention.
- Tag friends choose your location or add an activity.
- Set your camera's orientation.
- Add lenses, filters, or writing and drawing to your video.
- Click the blue "Start Live Video" button to start broadcasting.
- Interact with viewers and commenters.
- Click "Finish" to end the broadcast.
- Post your reply and save the video to your camera roll.

## **What Happens to The Live Video After The Broadcast Ends?**

The video will be published to the Page or profile so that fans and friends who missed it can watch at a later time. The broadcaster can remove the video post at any time, just like any other post.

## **Where do Live Videos Show up on Facebook?**

Videos will appear in News Feed and on the broadcaster's Page or profile while they are live. Once a broadcast has ended, live videos show up everywhere that other videos appear.

## **Facebook Live Best Practices**

- **Tell fans when you're broadcasting ahead of time:** Build anticipation by letting your audience know when you'll be going live with a written post.
- **Make sure you have a strong connection:** Check the app to make sure that you have a strong signal before going live. If you have weak signal, the 'Go Live' button will be greyed out.

- **Write a catchy description before going live:** A great description will capture people's attention and let them know what your broadcast is about.
- **Ask viewers to subscribe to Live notifications:** Remind your audience that they can tap on the Follow button on live videos and videos that were live so that they can get notifications the next time you go live.
- **Say hello to commenters by name and respond to their comments live:** Your audience will appreciate you mentioning their name and answer their questions when you are live!
- **Broadcast for longer:** The longer you broadcast, the more likely people are to discover and share your video with their friends on Facebook. Aim for at least 10 minutes!
- **Use a closing line to end of the broadcast:** Finish with a closing line, such as "Thanks for watching!" or "I'll be going live again soon." After you've finished, wait a few seconds until you hear the "ping" that indicates your broadcast is complete.
- **Be creative:** Try different types of broadcasts - and go live frequently - to keep your audience engaged. Here are some examples of discussion points; Q&A's, Breaking News, 'Live With...', Performance (song, scene, sport, display your craft etc.), Behind the Scenes and sharing a Demo!

## A Quick Guide to Facebook Stories

Facebook Stories are a great opportunity for brands to get in front of their audiences with engaging content and offers. But to make stories work for you, as with everything in marketing you need to create a strategy. One that includes specific goals, what metrics to track and a realistic posting strategy to ensure you can consistently produce creative and personalised content that helps keep your brand top-of-mind.

### *What are Facebook Stories?*

Facebook Stories is a multipurpose content sharing feature allowing users to share photos, videos, animations, polls, text posts and music. Stories have a 24-hour expiration date and are similar to Instagram Stories. For example, like Instagram, comments don't show in a feed, instead, they are sent directly to Facebook Messenger for brands to respond.

### *Why Your Business Should Be Using Facebook Stories*

One of the reasons why Facebook Stories get so much attention is due to how easy they are to find. Located at the top of a user's feed, they are on prime real estate. As the first thing your audience sees, you can position your brand directly in front of hungry fans and customers. As an added benefit, Unlike Instagram Stories which can only be shared from the mobile Instagram app, you can create and share Facebook Stories from your computer, the Facebook app, and even the Facebook Messenger app!



## ***Developing a Facebook Stories Strategy***

Your stories need to be a part of your social media marketing campaign, and like all campaigns, you need to have a strategy. Here are a few tips for developing your Facebook Stories strategy using the SMART method.

- ✓ **Set Clear and Specific Goals**  
Know what you want to accomplish and make sure your goals are directly related to the most important goal in your business e.g. revenue generation or brand awareness etc.
- ✓ **Use Relevant Measurables**  
Identify the metrics you'll track and make sure they are relevant and directly related to your bottom-line. For example, if you want to increase sales using video, focus on conversions and not how many comments a video receives.
- ✓ **Establish Attainable Deliverables**  
Ensure you have access to all the resources to help you accomplish your goals. For example, do you know who will be creating your posts? How often will you produce the content?
- ✓ **Set Realistic Growth Goals**  
Focus on smart goals that are based on data. For example, if you know that Boomerang videos stories with call to action buttons generate more clicks than text-based stories, establish exactly what your conversion rate is and experiment to increase it.
- ✓ **Develop Time-Specific Campaigns**  
Determine when you will end your campaign and gather all results to see how effective your efforts were. It's worth noting that it will take time to get the momentum going so you will need to create content regularly to generate results you can measure.

## ***Facebook Stories Content Options***

Whilst not as extensive as Instagram Stories, Users are still given a decent range of content options. You might not use them all and with time and experimentation you'll find out which types you prefer using that allow you to create a collection of engaging and useful content for your audience.

**Here are the Facebook Stories content options available:**

- **Text:** Allows you to create a text story by combining text on a background colour of your choice.
- **Front and Rear-Facing Camera:** You can switch from front-facing camera to rear-facing camera and vice-versa by tapping the flip-camera button. TIP! You can also change camera views while you're recording!
- **Uploading Pre-recorded Content:** You can upload a previously taken photo or video from your camera roll by either tapping the photo icon in the bottom-right corner or by swiping up on the screen.
- **Boomerang:** All you need do is point and shoot and it does the rest to turn your content into a GIF-like animation.
- **Polls:** Polls are a great way for brands to gather feedback related to your brand, products or services.
- **Music:** Allows you to search through an extensive list of songs. You'll be able to find music for anything from a party to something to play along with your story on pets.

- **Face Filters:** Facebook has invested a lot into AR (Augmented Reality) Filters over the years, and currently offers dozens of user-created filters for stories. All you have to do is tap the smiley face icon and you can scroll through all of the options.

After you've taken/uploaded a photo or video, you can use multiple creative tools to make your Facebook story even more interesting engaging — like stickers, text, user tags, links, drawing tools, and effects. For example, you can use name stickers to highlight other accounts or poll stickers to gather feedback from your audience. To access dozens of cool effects and animations, simply tap the magic wand icon. Once you're happy with your design, you can make your story work as hard as it can for you by adding a custom link or CTA button to it. When a custom link is added, viewers will be able to select "See more" to open the page within the Facebook browser — similar to how links work in Instagram Stories. Alternatively, you can add a CTA button to your stories, such as "Shop Now," "Get Directions" or "Learn More," to drive your viewers' to a specific page that is already linked on your Facebook account.

## How to Create Your First Facebook Story

Creating your Facebook Story may seem a little daunting, but once you've got to grips with the features and had a little practice, you will be a master in no time! Here's a breakdown of the features and functionality you should be aware of before you take to creating your first story:

- **Gallery Access:** Here, you're able to tap on the gallery icon and get access to all images saved on your phone.
- **Lighting Options:** Lighting, along with sound, are the two most important elements when producing great video. Facebook Stories uses a Lightning Bolt to help users pick the right lighting. This indicates whether your flash is on or off.
- **Image and Video Filters:** Facebook introduced filters to give users the ability to create an image or video with a certain kind of look and feel. Facebook's 4 filter options are: No filter, Warm, Glow and Cold.
- **Stickers:** A widely used feature, once you've taken a picture or recorded a video, you're able to add a sticker to it. Stickers are also available for use as calls to action.
- **Text:** Facebook Stories includes a text option along with the ability to pick a size, choose a colour, and select a font type. Perfect if you want to add a catchphrase, heading or annotate an image.
- **Freehand Drawing Tool:** With this tool you have the option of controlling the thickness of the paintbrush and access to a wide variety of colours.
- **Effects:** A collection of skins that you can apply to both images and video stories.
- **Face Filters:** Face filters are fun to play with and grab attention.
- **Use Front and/or Rear Camera:** A unique feature to Facebook Stories is the ability to switch between front and rear cameras while recording.

When you share a photo or video to your story, it will be available to your selected audience for 24 hours. You can revisit your stories in your story archive.

### ***To share to your story:***

- Go to the Stories section at the top of your News Feed.
- Click + Add to Story.
- Type an update or click Photo/Video to add a photo or video from your computer.
- Next to Your Story, you can click the audience selector (example: Public or Friends) to choose who can see your story.
- Click Post.

## **Facebook Stories Analytics**

Facebook Stories success can be tracked in two ways:

- **Individual stories:** Locate an active story and tap the eye icon in the bottom left-hand corner to see a list of people who have viewed your story.
- **Facebook Stories Insights:** Available via desktop, locate your page and click on Insights at the top. In the left column, click Stories and then click "Turn On."

Access to your Insights will show you a wealth of information such as:

- **Story Items:** A thumbnail of what your Page's story looks like.
- **Unique Story Opens:** The number of people who opened your Page's story.
- **Forward Taps:** The number of times someone taps to skip to the next piece of your story.
- **Backward Taps:** The number of times someone taps to go back to a previous piece of your story.
- **Forward Swipes:** The number of times someone swipes to skip to the next account's story.
- **Exits:** The number of times someone leaves the stories viewer to return to their News Feed.

## **Quick Content Ideas for Facebook Stories**

Facebook Stories are generally easy to create and low budget, here are a selection of content ideas to get you started. As a top tip, to create interesting content, create a storyboard and plan your stories. This should include letting people in your team or company know that you want to record content. Also, consider doing a series of trial runs before posting content. The more you shoot, the easier it will become to generate more content.

- **New Product or Service Launch**  
New product or service launches are a great way to attract customers. When you create yours try to include an offer that customer can capitalize on.
- **Behind-the-Scenes Footage**  
It's humanising and endearing to show the people behind the scenes in your business, especially when it's interesting content.
- **Holiday Messages**  
Harness the great opportunity in capitalising on holidays. Don't just wish people well, take the opportunity to give them a seasonal offer they can't say no to.
- **Special Events**  
If your business is hosting a special event, make sure you produce content from the event the entire day.

- **Customer Praise**  
Generate social proof by pulling the strong and impactful statements out of your testimonials and customer praise. Try screenshotting the post from a customer then adding your own text and a sticker to personalise and share it with your audience.
- **Competitions**  
Competitions are always a crowd magnet. Make sure you plan ahead and spread the word about your competition before it goes live to keep people excited about it and focus their attention on your brand.
- **New (and Different) Ways to Use Your Product**  
Some of the most useful content comes in the form of how-to videos. Storyboard your ideas to ensure that you present cohesive ideas and address challenges and questions your customers may have. Importantly, ensure that you focus on providing simple and easy-to-understand instructions in a pleasant tone.

## Advertising Basics on Facebook

While having and maintaining an engaging page is a great marketing tool in and of itself, Facebook has a wealth of options that you can utilise if you want to boost your presence and pay to advertise on Facebook. According to Facebook for Business, there are several different options with each option designed for a specific outcome:

- **Page Post Engagement Ads:** These ads are intended to get more people to see and interact with (like, comment, share, etc.) your content.
- **Page Like Ads:** These ads help more people find your page so you can get more page likes.
- **Clicks to Website Ads:** These ads send visitors to your website, and you can choose a specific page of your site to advertise.
- **Website Conversions:** This option helps you track what people do on your website once they've clicked through to it from your Facebook ad.
- **App Install and Engagement Ads:** If you have an app you want to show off, this ad will help you get more people installing and engaging with your app.
- **Event Response Ads:** These ads help you create an event and get more people in attendance.
- **Offer Claim Ads:** If you want to offer a special deal or discount, you can use these ads to spread the word to new customers.
- **Video Views:** This option allows you to create and track video ads on Facebook.
- **Local Awareness Ads:** These ads allow small businesses looking to reach new customers in their area to target people by location and boost business.
- **Carousel Ads:** Carousel Ads show multiple photos or products in one ad that users scroll through and interact with.
- **Dynamic Product Ads:** These ads help you promote specific products to people who have browsed your website or mobile app.

- **Slideshow Ads:** Slideshow Ads run similarly to Facebook's video ads, but instead they're slideshows made up of photos and are designed to be more lightweight (and load more easily) on mobile devices for slower Internet connections.

## Creating a Facebook Ad Campaign

### 1. *Choose a Campaign Objective Based on Your Goal*

The structure of a Facebook advertising campaign consists of three levels: a campaign, an ad set, and an ad. The first level, the campaign, is the basis of your ad. At the campaign level, you choose your objective, which is the action you want people to take when they see your ads. To choose the right objective simply answer the question “what’s the most important outcome I want from this ad?”

The objective you select depends on your strategy. For example, if you want to run a retargeting campaign to send people from Facebook to your website, choose either the Traffic or Conversions objective, depending on what specific action you want people to take.

### 2. *Build Your Ideal Custom Audience*

The second stage in the campaign structure is the ad set, which specifies how your ad will run. The middle level of the Facebook campaign structure is where you choose your targeting, placement, budget, and schedule. Targeting is one of the most important elements of your campaign and it can make or break performance, even before your campaign goes live. The easiest way to target your audience is to use the demographic and interest options. Here you’ll choose demographic constraints such as location, age, gender, and language. You can set basic demographic- and interest-based targeting at the ad set level. In the Detailed Targeting section, you can narrow your audience by choosing from thousands of interests, behaviours, demographics, and more. There’s no rule for how large your target audience should be. Typically, you’ll get the best results with basic targeting by using a layered approach, choosing a mixture of interests and behaviours to zero in on your ideal customer.

- **Location:** This allows you to show your ads to people based on their city, country or community, and is an especially useful tool for local businesses.
- **Demographics:** Facebook gives you options to target users based on gender, age group, education level, relationship status and more.
- **Interests:** Target users with interests or hobbies that align with your brand. For example, if your business sells clothing, you can use this option to reach users who have liked similar brands' pages on Facebook.
- **Behaviours:** With this option, you can target users based on the devices they use, the things they purchase and other activities they do while connected to Facebook. This is a great tool for mobile app developers — if your app is designed for iOS devices, for example, you can narrow your audience so that only those who use iPhones see your ads.
- **Connections:** With this option, you can reach people who have connected to your business in some way on the social network, as well as their friends. For example, if these users have RSVP'd

to one of your events or have friends who have liked your page. This is a great way to engage people who are already somewhat familiar with your business.

### **3. Build and Test Your Ad Creative**

The last stage of the campaign structure is the ad level, otherwise known as your creative. Your ad is what your audience will see. This is where you choose your ad format and creative including images, videos, news feed text, URLs and a call-to-action button. What your Facebook ad will look like depends on your advertising strategy, campaign objective, and ad format. Some objectives constrain which ad formats you can use. For example, the Video Views objective allows you to choose only video ad formats.

***Top Tip: Create multiple Facebook ads and split test their performance.***

*The number-one best practice of Facebook ad creative is to create multiple ads as you run your campaigns. Don't just stop after you've created a single ad, by creating multiple ads to test variations in copy, image used, and even overall ad format, you can improve performance over the life of your campaign and find out what formats resonate best with your audience.*

## **How to Analyse Your Facebook Ad Results: The Key Metrics to Track**

In order to know if your Facebook ads are working, there are several key metrics you should be tracking. The more you're able to successfully track how each ad campaign is doing, the more you can learn from its performance.

### **Cost Per Result**

The Cost per result indicates how cost-efficiently you achieved the objectives you set in your ad campaign. Setting a metric that is tied directly to a business objective helps frame the success of your ad. For example, you could set a result that is tied to conversion and count a success each time someone makes a purchase through your website after receiving a specific ad.

Cost per Result = total amount spent / total # of results

You can adjust the specific settings for a result to learn more about each different campaign you are running. By comparing Cost per Result on a per campaign basis, you can easily find out which campaigns are performing best.

## **Ad Impressions**

The impressions metric measures how often your ads were on screen for your target audience. If you are running a brand awareness campaign, you will need to closely monitor this metric as it tells you what your brand exposure level is. Impressions are most important depending on who you're targeting and the type of campaign you're running. For example, it's not really an important metric to track if you're running a lead generation or e-commerce-focused campaign. If you want to optimize this type of campaign, use A/B testing to create and share different versions of the ad. Whichever one has the most impressions is the one to use across your entire audience.

## **Ad Frequency**

The frequency metric tells you the average number of times each person saw your ad. For example, a frequency of 5 means that, on average, each person who has seen your ad has seen it 5 times. If you're running a branding campaign, you'll want your frequency number to be high since that helps recall - the ability for a person who saw your ad to remember your company name and what your company does. When frequency gets to 3, stop running the ad and create a new one with a new message and visuals to avoid boring your audience and giving them 'banner blindness.'

## **Ad Clicks**

The clicks metric is very important to track as it represents the number of times someone has clicked on your ad. Any action someone takes within your ad is considered a click. This can include clicking a link to your website or liking the ad or expanding the ad to read more. The more clicks, the better, as it means people are interested in our content and checking it out in more detail. It is worth noting that most clicks occur on mobile.

## **Click-Through Rates**

The click-through rate (CTR) metric indicates how many link clicks you've received on your ad compared to how many impressions your ad received. It is a common metric used to understand how ads drive traffic to websites and other destinations.

The Facebook analytics for the ad includes two CTR columns. The first column — CTR (All) — represents all clicks within the ad. The second column — CTR (Links) — represents the links clicked within the ad. By looking at both, you have good insight into how well your ads are at getting people to click through. If your ad quality and targeting are well done, you should see a very high CTR.

Aim for a mid- to high-range CTR. Anything less suggests that your targeting is off or that your ad copy or creatives aren't enticing. To get some attention, try using positive images, bright colours or large, eye-catching keywords in your ads. To prevent a drop in CTR, you should look to change your target audience. Pay attention to the language you use also as the right headline choice can massively increase click-through rate. While "Learn More" has a higher CTR than "Sign Up," the latter has a higher conversion rate. Choose something like a cliff-hanger, or "How To" to get people to act.

## **Cost Per Click / Cost Per Impression**

Cost per click, or CPC, shows how much you're paying when someone clicks your ad. The cost per impression, or CPM, shows how much you're paying per 1,000 views.

Here's how you calculate them:

$$\text{CPC} = \text{advertising cost} / \text{total \# of clicks}$$

$$\text{CPM} = \text{advertising cost} \times 1,000 / \text{\# of impressions}$$

Facebook rewards you with a lower CPC or CPM if it sees your audience engaging with your ads. It tells them that the ads are relevant and making their users happy. A high relevance score means a lower CPC.

It's important to test different options to find a version that resonates with your target audience as Facebook stops delivering ads with low relevance scores. A high Click Through Rate means a lower Cost Per Click.

## **Conversion Rates**

This is one of the most important metrics as it tells you what percentage of people who click your ad goes on to make a purchase and become a customer.

To get people to complete a specific action and convert, your ad needs to be clear on the value and benefits you offer. The more you can get people to see this, the better the chances are of them taking the next step and buying. You can make it easy for people to move through the conversion process by sending out ads during peak times and being very specific about who you're targeting. Putting ads in front of the "right" people means your chances of boosting conversion rates increase.

Ads that make people feel like they're part of something exclusive are more likely to get people to take action. Research has shown to include giveaways where possible as this increases conversion rates.

## **Cost Per Conversion**

The cost per conversion metric tells you how much you're paying for each lead or sale. For example, if you spent £100 on Facebook ads and had five people convert, your cost per conversion would be £20. It's up to you to know whether this cost per conversion is acceptable or not.

Explore your figures to see if your ad spend is in proportion to your conversion. If there's a discrepancy between the two, you should look to either adjust your spending or alter your ad copy or design to attract and convert more people. Ads with a high relevancy score help reduce the cost-of-conversion. Experiment with ad placements like the Newsfeed, the right-hand column or the Audience. It's worth noting that a low cost-per-click doesn't mean a low cost-per-conversion.



# The Ultimate Guide to Facebook Shops

The Internet is a powerful platform and there are millions of people searching the internet everyday, looking for products and services. Online shopping is massive, growing year on year as people see it as a convenient method to purchase products, where you can also buy at any time in the day. Facebook is one of the online spots where a lot of people spend the majority of their online time, in fact, Facebook users spend an average of 40+ minutes per day on there with a good chunk of that time spent on Facebook shopping. Therefore, like it or not, if you want your ecommerce business to grow, it's time to take advantage of Facebook as a selling tool!

Facebook might not give you as many features as the ecommerce big players out there such as Shopify or BigCommerce, but what you do get it is a great basic tool filled with the essentials for you to start selling your products – plus a ready primed audience to share them directly with!

For time and cash strapped business owners, what you'll love about a Facebook Shop is that you don't even need to have any pre-existing online store to link it too – you can actually run your entire operation solely via Facebook if you want to.

Still not convinced? Here are 5 feature reasons why you should seriously consider setting up a Facebook shop!

- ✓ You can add an unlimited number of products
- ✓ You can neatly show your offering by organizing your products into collections and categories
- ✓ You can communicate directly with your customers through the page
- ✓ You are provided with vital stats on your sales, visits, and more
- ✓ Your products can appear in Facebook Marketplace, giving you instant access to a much larger base of potential customers.

## How do I set up a Facebook Store?

With Facebook Shops, you can display and sell items on Facebook and Instagram. Anyone who visits your shop will see your items and can browse and buy them. If you use a website to sell your items, you can send people to your website from your Facebook or Instagram shop to complete their purchase. Follow the steps below to set up a shop;

To set up a shop on Facebook, you must:

- ✓ Be a Business Manager admin
- ✓ Own your Facebook Page and catalog in the same Business Manager
- ✓ Have Manage Page permissions for the Page and Manage catalog permissions for the catalog in Business Manager

To set up a shop on Instagram, you must:

- ✓ Be a Business Manager admin
- ✓ Own your Instagram business account, Facebook Page and catalog in the same Business Manager
- ✓ Have Manage Page permissions for the Facebook Page connected to the Instagram business account
- ✓ Have Manage catalog permissions for the catalog

You need to use a computer to set up your shop in Commerce Manager.

**STEP ONE:** Go to the Create Your Shop page.

**STEP TWO:** In the Choose A Way to Sell section, select Create a Shop and click Get Started.

**STEP THREE:** In the Assets section, click on your shop to upgrade, or click + Create a Shop.

**STEP FOUR:** In the Start Setting Up Your Shop section, select Your Website. Click Get Started.

**STEP FIVE:** In the Choose Your Business section, you'll see a list of Facebook Pages you're a Page admin on. Select the business you'd like to add your shop to. Click Next.

**STEP SIX:** In the Account Details section, provide an Account Name and select a Business Account. Click Next.

**STEP SEVEN:** In the Where People Can View Your Shop section, select where you'd like to create your shop. If you have an Instagram business profile and a Facebook Page, you can select both.

**STEP EIGHT:** In the Catalog section, select an existing catalog or create a new one and click Next. Note: You can only select one catalog to use for your shop and you can't switch it later.

**STEP NINE:** Look over your shop details, review and agree to the Seller Performance and Accountability Policies and click Create Your Shop.

**STEP TEN:** Woo Hoo! You've now created your shop! You'll now need to create a collection to organise your products. You can also customize your shop by choosing your featured collection and changing the look and feel of your shop. Finally Publish your shop. People can see your shop once Facebook review and approve your collections, typically within 24 hours.

## COMMON FAQs

### How Do I Create Product Collections?

To create a collection, click on Collections in your Commerce Manager account and select Create collection. When promoted, add the following details:

- **Name:** Give your collection a clear relevant name within the available 30 characters and include emojis if you wish. Try to make the name descriptive, so viewers don't have to think hard to figure out what's in it.

- **Description:** Craft a good description explaining what your collection features within 200 characters. This is optional, so you can skip it, but it's worth taking the few minutes to do it as it helps to give interested customers a clearer idea.
- **Cover media:** Pick a high quality eye-catching cover image that is 800 x 600 pixel size and showcases your product(s).

When you're done, click Next and start adding your products to the collection. You can add between 6 to 30 products in each collection that you create. For each product that you add, fill in the following details:

- **Name:** Add your product's name. Again, try to make it self-explanatory rather than something fancy. For instance, instead of 'Purple Words' write 'Purple Lined Notebook.'
- **Product Picture:** Ensure all product pictures are high quality and correctly sized at 600 x 600 pixels.
- **Website Links:** If you have a website, add a link to the product page. This is optional as if you don't have a website you can allow buyers to checkout directly off Facebook instead.
- **Extras:** You'll also need to fill in other details such as a current price, sale price if any, inventory availability, shipping, and more.

When you've finished, click Confirm and hit Publish.

**BONUS TIP:** Alternatively, if you have an existing Shopify Store you can skip the manual labour above and upload products via Shopify. Before you start, just make sure your Shopify account is connected to your Facebook Page.

1. Click the Products tab in your Shopify store to select the products you want to add.
2. Next, choose Actions. Select Make products available from the drop down menu.
3. This will bring up a popup asking where you want to display your products. Select Facebook and click Make product available.
4. That's it! The selected products will show up in your Facebook Shop.
5. Hardly any time? You can speed up the process further by upload collections to your store using Shopify. Just select Collections in your Shopify dashboard and do the same steps as above.

## How Do I Customize My Shop?

When you add collections and products to your shop, you can customize how they appear to your customers to reflect your brand. Here are some options you have,

- Add, remove and arrange featured collections, products and product grids by dragging and dropping them. As in real stores, you should feature your bestsellers at the top of the shop so you can entice buyers to shop from you.
- Choose collections to feature at the top of your shop.
- Change the size of your text and choose the colour of your buttons. Try not to go too wacky here, just use a readable font size and colour, so your viewers don't have to struggle to read what's in store.
- Preview how your shop will look on light or dark mode.

*TOP TIP: Stick with your brand colours when customizing your Shop to make sure it will reflect your brand personality.*

## **How Do I Access My Shop Insights?**

In Commerce Manager, you can get insights on the performance of your sales, products and more. The metrics you see will depend on if you use onsite checkout to sell directly on Facebook and Instagram or if you have chosen to have purchases occur on your website. To see Insights in Commerce Manager, click Insights from the menu on the left and then Click Overview to understand your shop's performance. Use the tabs to switch between filtering by time/date or filtering between Facebook or Instagram. Click Product to see insights specific to a product. You can also search by product name, category or variant.

## **Top Tips for a Successful Facebook Store**

### **Create Visual Posts**

Make sure your store front is professional and highly visual so that your products essentially sell themselves. If your budget can allow, use professional photography and professional copy on articles and testimonials about your products. When it comes to your actual posts about your products aim to utilize the power of Facebook Live posts and Stories created from videos, as they can both instantly connect your company with your potential customers. Videos are expected to account for more than 80% of all internet traffic by 2020 so it's vital you harness all the available video tools Facebook has to offer. You should also look to regularly switch out your product images and videos and allow customers to participate in creating and showcasing images and videos.

- Strong obvious branding of all fonts, colour palettes, graphics and messages
- Consistent design style on all platforms including website, Facebook shop and social media
- High-quality imagery with a mixture of clean product shots and lifestyle shots
- Short, punchy captions to work alongside the image
- The first look at your storefront should be simple, stylish and full of visual content that

### **Promote Your Products**

While you should avoid the dreaded sales pitch in your posts, there is nothing wrong with showcasing your products to an interested public to generate traffic and sales. Provided you are giving enough value in your posts to your audience, they will be open to learning about your products via sales-focused posts. Build those relationships to create loyal brand advocates by creating engagement drive posts, rewarding their loyalty with freebies and special promotions.

### **Use Facebook Ads**

The key to getting more customers and increasing your conversions from your Facebook store, you need to grow your Facebook audience. This can take a long time doing it organically so why not work with

Facebook to build a highly targeted audience quickly and relatively cheaply. Facebook has the largest audience of any social media platform but to truly reach it, the unfortunate fact is you must pay. The good news is that Facebook advertising options are very good, so you do get a lot of bang for your buck. Start with boosting your popular posts and then you can move on to a robust ad strategy for your promotions such as summer sales etc. While creating ads, consider directly inserting a link to your Facebook shop so that the targeted audience are just a click away from seeing your products and making a purchase decision.

### **Encourage Reviews**

Social proof is vital in influencing purchaser behaviour, in fact 63% of customers are more likely to make a purchase from a site with user reviews. When you do it right, social proof can make a huge difference to your business. Reviews are the simplest way to add social proof to your Facebook store so you should actively encourage customers to leave Facebook reviews that also feature customer photos whenever you can. These reviews add up to create a business "rating" that instantly shows your business to be reputable and importantly that you value providing a seamless customer journey from end to end.

### **Create a Mobile Friendly Experience**

People expect a seamless shopping experience when using their phones especially during checkout. Go through your shop through the eyes of a customer - browse products, add items to cart and place the order to ensure that it's a seamless experience and one that can easily be done on the go. Pay particular attention to ensuring customers check out in as few clicks as possible. Eliminate any unnecessary steps for the shopper.

### **Offer Different Payment Methods**

Giving customers more ways to pay can help increase sales online. Accept modern and multiple payment options, like ApplePay, to reach more consumers.

### **Offer Discounts and Offers**

Entice consumers to make a purchase by offering discounts through your online store. Fast Company reported that 42 percent of people like a Facebook page to get a discount or coupon, so it is a no brainer to offer them to your soon-to-be-customers! There are also apps such as AgoraPulse to easily run contests, giveaways, etc. With these widely popular apps, you can create sophisticated campaigns with a call-to-action to visit your Facebook store to receive a special offer (either a discount code, or a store-only sale).

# How to Build More Members of Your Facebook Group

Groups for Pages, enables the 60 million+ Pages on Facebook to create their own unique communities and feeds. More than 1 billion people around the world use Groups and more than 100 million people see Groups as the most important part of their experience on Facebook. Facebook Groups are the place to connect with other like-minded people and are becoming increasingly important for brands and businesses aiming to cultivate a community.

Whether you choose to have just a Facebook Page, Group or Both in your Facebook marketing mix, Here's a quick overview of the positive features for each:

## ***Facebook Page***

- ✓ Built-in analytics (Page Insights).
- ✓ Call-to-action button (e.g. Sign Up, Book Now, Learn More) on your Facebook Page.
- ✓ Boost your Facebook Page and Page posts with Facebook ads.
- ✓ Like and comment as your Facebook Page.
- ✓ Add apps and services to your Facebook Page, so that your fans can easily order a product, make a booking, get a quote and more.

## ***Facebook Group***

- ✓ Built-in analytics (Group Insights) now.
- ✓ Set your Facebook group as private (Closed or Secret).
- ✓ Post documents, create polls, and even buy and sell in your Facebook group.
- ✓ Group chat with your group members.
- ✓ Members receive notifications about new posts to the Group.

## **10 Things you Can Use Your Facebook Group For:**

- Building Relationships
- Growing a Community
- Establishing Yourself as an Expert
- Share your Blog Posts
- Drive Traffic to your Website
- Grow Your Subscriber / Email List
- Launch New Products and Sell Existing Ones
- Host Trainings
- Find Partners

## **Tips For Growing Your Group**

- **Engage With Your Members Regularly**  
When your community is in its initial small stage, there might not be many posts from your community members. Help cultivate conversation by regularly (perhaps 2/3 times a week)

adding relevant, helpful conversations to encourage engagement. For example, you could welcome your new members every Monday, initiate a discussion on every Wednesday, and invite members to share their weeks' achievements on Friday.

- **Use Analytics to Inform Your Strategy**

Group Insights can be accessed by clicking on "Group Insights" on the left sidebar. Here, you can find out insights such as how your Facebook Group is growing, when your members are most engaged, and who your most engaged members are. Use these metrics and insights to inform your community-building strategy.

- **Host Regular Events**

Hosting events is a great way to get community members involved and attract inactive members back to the community. In-person meetups help to reinforce the connections made online, making the relationships more meaningful. Here are some online and offline events you could host:

- AMAs (Ask-Me-Anything) with a community member or industry expert
- Q&As with someone from your company
- Talks and panel discussions
- Mastermind sessions or community discussions
- Casual get-to-know-each-other gatherings such as brunch, picnic, dinner, etc.

Once you have planned your event, create an event in your Facebook Group and invite members to attend.

- **Email Your List and Invite them to Join**

If people subscribe to your email list, send them a welcome email with a link to join your group!

- **Write a Blog Post Promoting Your Facebook Group**

This is a great way to get in front of a new audience and attract more people to your group. You can use this piece of content and promote it on Pinterest, Instagram, and Facebook to expand your reach.

- **Leverage Your Friends and Group Members**

Encourage your members to invite their friends in your post, group description and per private message directly when inviting them to your group. You may also encourage your group members to help you and reward those who put in the most effort.

- **Advertise Your Group**

Remember to promote the link to your group on other social media sites like Twitter or in YouTube videos etc, wherever you can. You should also look to post the link to your group in similar groups and invite members directly to join your group via private message. Don't be spammy with this technique though, simply 'like' other members posts and write them a private message, asking them to join your group so you can create new relationships at the same time and they will more likely have a look at your post in your own group.

**Top Tip: Get rid of Spammers.** Admonish or delete spammers to keep your group clean and on topic. Decide who you are going to accept in your group and check out their profiles if necessary.

- **Make Sure you Respond to Every Post in Your Group**

You want to reward people for posting high quality content into your group, so reward them by commenting and letting them know how much you like what they're posting. Think positive reinforcement.

- **Give Your Group What They Want**

You'll be surprised at how being of service will build your client base, no matter what your business is. Ask people what their needs, wants and desires are, and structure your posts around that. The more you can fill a need, the better.

## How to Build a Following and Amplify Your Impact

### ***Make Yourself Likeable***

If you want to be liked on Facebook, you need to make yourself likeable first. This means you need to incentivise and attract people to your page by having an active page full of quality and consistent posts with good, valuable information and consistent engagement and interaction between your page and others.

### ***Promote your Facebook Page on Other Social Media***

Anywhere your customers interact with your brand is an opportunity to encourage them to follow you on Facebook. Once you develop your presence, remember to promote it across all your other social media platforms sharing your URL in your profile descriptions as well as sharing your most recent posts as well as mentioning it on your e-newsletter, your email signature, business card, product packaging and anywhere else your customers will see it. This also applies if you're an active participant in a forum or membership site, placing a signature with your fan page link will direct more attention to your page.

### ***Use Tagging and Acknowledgments***

Tagging an author, influencer or a popular Facebook page in your post is a great networking tool that can drive new connections. You should however have a good reason to do this, for example if the page or author has posted something that will be useful and valuable to your fans. Be authentic and selfless in how you do it and you may be rewarded with increased attention to your page.



### ***Create a Facebook Messenger Bot***

Facebook users exchange 20 billion messages with businesses every month, and those users expect a business to respond almost immediately. Basically, a chatbot is a piece of automated messaging software that uses AI to converse with people. If you want to communicate with your customers, building a Facebook Messenger bot has a wealth of benefits. Namely, it allows you to reach your audience directly, save time and money on customer care, identify leads and handle e-commerce transactions. Importantly, each bot is as unique as the business it serves. They can help with common customer service questions, such as delivery tracking and appointment booking. But they can also drive discovery—suggesting the perfect pair of jeans or ordering dinner for example.

### ***Reward Your Loyal Supporters***

Encourage your loyal customers to join your Facebook page as supporters and reward them with special deals for consistent support. This equally applies to those already fans of your page that continually show their support. A recommendation or shout-out from a happy customer is a lot more attractive than a marketing slogan, so reward your fans and they will likely share with their friends how great you are.

### ***Host Contests***

Contests are a popular method of building an audience on Facebook and, if executed correctly, can drive huge fan growth over a short period of time which will have a big impact on your Facebook page. You should test a wide variety of different types of contests and see which resonates with your audience but always remember that you need your contest to captivate attention in a way that gets people thinking about your products or services, but make it simple enough that the majority on people can easily take part in.

#### ***Popular Contest Ideas***

- Tell Us How You Would Use [Product] to Win it!
- Help Name our New [Product]
- Caption This to Win [Prize]!
- Friday Giveaway! Simply post \_\_\_\_\_ in the comments to be in with a chance to win!

### ***Connect With Other Page Managers***

Connecting and interacting with other page managers, especially local business to you can be a powerful tactic for making new connections and gathering attention. If there is a local business to you on Facebook, then look to connect and work with each other to cross-promote. Not only will you develop a meaningful connection with another business that can lead to future opportunities, you will become visible to their audience which can help drive new likes and connections.

### ***Join Conversations and Comment on Other Pages***

One of the easiest ways to gain more exposure to your Facebook page is to utilise the social side of the network and interact with and join conversations of others to make yourself more visible. By actively searching for relevant businesses and conversations to interact with and join you can demonstrate your authority and authenticity by adding your relevant and valuable thoughts to conversations which will ultimately get yourself noticed by others who will likely be drawn to your page.

### ***Utilise Print Media***

Every piece of print media you use in your business from brochures to signage, business cards, magazine ads and vehicle stickers presents an opportunity for you to clearly display that you are on Facebook. Make yourself visible and you make it easier for the people you have connected with in person and who have seen other forms of your corporate literature to know you have a presence and connect with your Page.

### ***Use Facebook Advertising***

Facebook offers several paid options for you to advertise your business. From Facebook ads to sponsored stories and promoted posts, there are many customisable options for you to utilise allowing you to have the freedom to create an ad campaign that works for your business.

### ***Give Your Fans a Reason to Connect***

To make people want to connect with you, you have to give them a reason to do so. This means in addition to consistently providing quality content you need to utilise other means of incentivising people to connect with you from hosting regular competitions or giveaways to holding a fan of the week showcase, there are many options available for you to encourage people to like you. Simply learn what your target audience wants, why they like you and what content they respond well to and you will easily be able to use this information to attract more people to connect with you.

### ***Turn Your Facebook Page Into a Community***

Turning your page in to a community hub where fans are free to interact and share their opinions is a great way to learn more about your community and help build your brand. By actively getting your fans involved in your page by asking things about them and encouraging them to interact with each other, you utilise the fundamental aspect of why they are on social media, they just want to be heard. Therefore, build your strategy around encouraging others to use your Facebook presence as a platform for sharing, and you will reap rewards for your business.

### ***Be Social With Your Fans***

Make it a habit to check your page daily for any new interactions or conversations you can join in with and respond to. It is by taking the time to respond to those who are talking to you that you show that you are genuinely interested in what they are talking about online and you have real conversations that build relationships. From this follows the development of a community of loyal followers that are likely to recommend you to others and share and interact with your content, allowing it to be shared and seen across whole new audiences.

### ***Add a Facebook Like Button or Box to Your Website***

Adding a Like Box to your website and blog is a great tool to utilise and it can be a big generator for likes and traffic to your page. You can place the button wherever you like on your website—perhaps in the sidebar, header or footer. You can also add the Facebook Like button to thank-you pages that appear after someone signs up for your mailing list, submits a lead form or makes a purchase. Since those visitors have already connected with your business, they will likely connect with you on Facebook as well.

### ***Include Your Facebook Page in Guest Author Bios***

When filling out your author bio or profile on a website where you contribute content, look for a place to add your Facebook page link. If there's more than one field to enter a link to your Facebook page, enter it multiple times. Some sites use plugins that will only pull from one field or another.

### ***Connect Profiles With Pages***

One very simple and effective tactic you and every employee can do to promote your Facebook page is to add your business as your current employer in your personal profile's Work section. There are many benefits to this tactic, at a basic useful level it ensures that there's a link to your Facebook page everywhere your profile appears on Facebook. An additional benefit is that when you leave a comment on a website and/or participate in industry-related Facebook groups and comment on industry blogs that use the Facebook comment platform, your page is linked within that comment as well. When you connect your page and profile, you'll build a lot of exposure for your Facebook page that could lead to more fans.

Adding the link is simple. Go to your personal About page and edit your Work and Education information. Click Add a Workplace and select your Facebook page as the company. After you enter details about your position, check the "I currently work here" box and choose the dates as applicable. Make sure the visibility is set to Public and click Save Changes.

### ***Interact as Your Page***

Most users interact on Facebook as themselves (using their personal profile), but if you're looking to grow your page's audience, consider using Facebook as your page to garner more attention. Once you've chosen to use Facebook as your page, you can go to other related pages in your industry and comment on those pages' posts as your page. This way, you're bringing attention to your page, not your personal profile.

### ***Create Facebook Groups***

Facebook Groups make it easy to connect with specific sets of people, like family, teammates or co-workers. Groups are dedicated spaces where you can share updates, photos or documents and message other group members. With the idea behind Facebook groups being that even with a small group, you can start to build a community of like-minded people.

- ✓ **An easy way to get into people's inboxes:** By default, people get emails any time there is a new wall post. That means that when you have a new product or something that important to say everyone that's in the group will get it via email.
- ✓ **A free way to create a paid member-only group:** Now, you can't do all the payment through Facebook, but you can very easily make a PayPal buy button to take payment and then you manually give the person who bought access within 24 hours.
- ✓ **Sell Products:** A great alternative/addition to selling products or digital goods on your website, you're now able to sell in Facebook groups. Once you create a For Sale group, you'll see an option to "sell something" in your Facebook update.
- ✓ **Establish Expertise:** One of the easiest ways to use Facebook groups for business is to become a resource in your field. Create a group or contribute your knowledge to one that already exists.

***Pro Tip:*** *If you set up a group for your business, create guidelines for the group and put them in the description area and/or pin them to the top of the group feed. You'll need to moderate the group to ensure that members are adhering to the guidelines and not spamming everyone else with their own agenda.*

### ***Curate Content for Similar pages to Get Noticed by Their Fans***

Simply send each of your targeted Facebook pages a message offering to curate content for them once a week or even just once or twice a month. It is worth noting however that the more exposure, the quicker the results. The pages you approach should appreciate the opportunity to mix up their content not to mention that it takes some of the pressure off from posting. Be sure to remember that the pages you reach out to need to be complementary, not competition. Chances are anyway that any direct competitors likely won't allow you to use their Facebook page to promote yourself.

### ***Seek Out Promotional Swaps***

Search for and list Facebook pages for products, services or communities that are complementary to yours. Once you have a robust list, craft each page a message, explaining a bit about yourself and your Facebook status and stats such as page likes and engagement. Offer to mention their Facebook page to your fans on a Facebook update if they mention yours in return. Once you reach an agreement, share your cross-promotional posts. Remember to track your results so you know which partners are good to work with in the future.

**Note:** This tactic works best when you have a good start with 3,000 to 4,000 likes on your Facebook page. If your page is light on fans, you may want to reach out to your email list or consider doing an inexpensive Facebook advertising campaign to increase your fan base.

### ***Use Facebook Business Suite***

The Business Suite is a single dashboard for your linked Facebook and Instagram accounts that allows you to post, schedule, message, advertise, and view insights all in one place – designed by Facebook to improve the experience of managing a business across all their apps. These combined insights feature is very useful for looking at the big-picture on your performance as you can compare what works on each and what doesn't. To access Business Suite, on a desktop log into the Facebook account associated with your business. If you're eligible, you'll then automatically be redirected to Business Suite when you visit [business.facebook.com](https://business.facebook.com).

### ***Spy on Your Competition***

Is your competition's page growing or lacklustre? What types of posts are working for them? What isn't? You are busy trying to run your own business on Facebook so you probably don't have the time to constantly keep checking on what your competitors are up too. Thankfully Facebook have introduced a very handy feature called "Pages to Watch." It allows you to watch what other pages are doing on Facebook in order to compare their results to yours. To access it, go to your Page and click "Insights" then scroll down to the area below your posts.

# Tips for Success

## ***Optimise Your Profile***

Facebook is continually working and updating its features for businesses to help them create the best experience for your audience when they are on your page. It is up to as the business page owner therefore to utilise the many features Facebook has to offer to make your page as competitive and effective as it can be.

## ***Featured Video***

The use and popularity of video has grown exponentially throughout the past few years and as such Facebook has revamped its video sharing tools to accommodate this growing trend. One of the great features you can now utilise is the ability to upload and select a featured video for your Facebook Page. The video will occupy a prominent position on your page, highlighted under the video section of your Page in addition to being visible on the left side of your Facebook Timeline. Videos are a popular and powerful way to share your story in an engaging way so ensure that the video you choose to represent your page is high quality, engaging and informative.

## ***Use Photos***

Using visual content such as photos within your posts is continually shown in studies to get the highest amount of engagement on Facebook. As such, they present a huge opportunity for brands to connect with fans and generate more likes, comments and shares. Photos and videos are more visible and take up more space on a user's newsfeed than a simple text-based post giving you the opportunity to showcase your business in a way that text alone cannot. It is vital you regularly and consistency include high-quality, eye catching and relevant visuals.

## ***Create a Unique Facebook Web Address***

Facebook offers you the invaluable opportunity to change your Facebook URL and personalise it for your business. The URL is what people will enter to find your Facebook page and it follows the format of <http://facebook.com/username>. It is vital therefore that you choose a clear username that is reflective of your business as URLs are heavily weighted by search engines.

## ***Keyword-Rich "About" Section***

Ensure that when you fill in your About section on your page that you not only consider making it clear, fully filled, accurate and concise but also look to utilise the SEO benefits by filling it with keyword rich information. Your About section, Mission and Company Description are all searchable on Facebook and other search engines, so it is vital that they are as optimised as they can be.

### ***Build Out Your About***

- Make sure all of your important details are placed front and centre. You have a short amount of time to gain the attention of potential fans so put the most relevant details at the top of your "About."
- Make your about stand out with rich content. Include links to webinars, videos, upcoming events you're hosting, and in-depth information about you, your product and/or service.
- Add your mission, vision and values along with any founding details that would matter to potential clients.
- Add keywords and phrases that are relevant to your business and would be searched by any consumer looking for your small business.
- Provide success stories and examples of how you've helped others. Was there a difficult situation you were able to work through? Highlight that story.
- Remove jargon from your content and talk to fans in a conversational way.

### ***Relevant, Up-To-Date Contact Information***

When someone is looking on your page it is vital that you make yourself easily contactable. Ensure that all the contact information you have on your page, from your email address to your phone number and location is all up to date.

### ***Call-to-Action Button***

The Call-to-Action button is a great feature that you can add to further utilise your Facebook page. With this new feature, admins can choose from a selection of call-to-action buttons such as Book Now, Contact Us, Use App, Play Game, Shop Now, Sign Up and Watch Video that will be added next to the "Like" button at the top of your Facebook Page. An added benefit is that admins can edit the call-to-action button to link to a page on or external to Facebook.

### ***Never Stop Listening to Your Audience***

Listening to your customers is a fundamental aspect of having a successful social media presence. The essence of social media is based upon creating conversations, engaging your audience and listening to them showing you have a genuine interest in what they have to say about you and your business. You can then take what you learn from listening and use that information to help better many aspects of your business in the future from your products and services, to your content and future marketing campaigns. Ultimately by listening to what others say about you are armed with the valuable knowledge to know what your customers really want and need which will help your business to successfully grow.

### ***Humanise Your Brand***

The most successful companies on Facebook are those that show the real people behind the brand. Facebook offers an informal and chatty platform for your opinions, stories, humour and advice that gives your business a human face and it is through this great ability to humanise your business through the content you post that ultimately makes your business appear more engaging, relatable and trustworthy to others. Ensure you utilise this opportunity for your customers to get to know the real you better, so whether you are sharing industry expertise, reviewing a product or sharing an aspect of your brand story, each post gives your customers helping them to better understand who you are, what you do, and ultimately tells them why they should care about you.

### ***Be Consistent With Calls to Action***

By ensuring you include a clear call to action in every post, you make each post purposeful for your business. Whether you direct the reader to an external blog post or ask them to leave a comment for example you need to consistently encourage the reader to continue the interaction with you either on Facebook or externally on one of your other sites.

### ***Be Prepared to Adjust if Things Aren't Working***

A key aspect of maintaining a successful social media marketing strategy is to continually look to see what is and isn't working and how you can improve your Facebook marketing. This involves initially setting realistic objectives for your presence in the beginning and continually analysing your analytics to ensure you are meeting them. If you find you are not getting what you want from your Facebook presence, then you know you need to adjust some aspects of your strategy. It is through this adjustment that you can learn and grow as a business online which will ensure you are presenting yourself as effectively as you can online and creating better experiences for your audience.

### ***Stay up to Date with Facebook's News and Developments***

As Facebook evolves it is likely to make important changes that you as a business need to be aware of. Remember to follow the official Facebook business page and subscribe to their blog to make sure you are aware and up to date with Facebook's business updates.

### ***Optimise the Cover Photo***

Your page's cover photo represents one of the most important parts of your page. When someone visits your page, the cover image is most likely going to be the first thing a visitor will see and as such presents an opportunity to showcase your products and services, show your personality, and attract attention with eye catching and relevant photos that utilise holidays, seasons and other special events etc. all of which help towards lead generation for your business. Ensure you utilise the cover photo by creating an



eye catching, good quality image with a strong CTA. Ultimately, design your cover photo with a clear primary purpose of gathering attention and prospects.

### ***Utilise Major Events, Trends and Holidays***

Major events, trends and national holidays present great opportunities for you to utilise to generate more attention for your page. From running a special competition, updating your cover photo to reflect the holiday season, to running a special promotion to coincide with a big event, there are many ways in which you can utilise these major occurrences to encourage fan engagement. Ensure you are organised, and plan ahead so make a list of major events and holidays and start thinking of ways in which you be inspired to get your business involved.

### ***Always Make Giving Good Customer Service a Priority***

Giving good customer service is essential for any brand on Facebook. You need to accept the social aspect of social media and take the time to respond and interact with those who are talking to you. Answering questions and queries and responding to complaints and issues are a natural part of any business so you need to show your fans that you are listening and care about what they have to say by responding quickly and genuinely to them. In doing so you not only boost engagement, you show your audience that you are human and that you care about what they have to say.

### ***Let People Post Content on Your Facebook Page***

There is the option on Facebook pages to not allow others to comment on your page. However, whilst it is available, it doesn't mean you should use it. In fact, not allowing people to post content on your page is a mistake as you stop the ability for people to interact with you. Whilst it opens you up to the potential of public complaints and negativity, it also opens up genuinely interested audience who wants to interact with you, hear your story and share your content.

### ***Learn From your Audience Insights***

By regularly exploring your analytics, you have the ability to understand your audience from what they engage with best, what content they like most, when they are online and many other important factors that help you optimise your content strategy, target your advertising better and generate more return on investment.

### ***Enable the Follow Button***

The Follow button allows anyone to follow your public updates. If fans want to follow you, they just have to visit your profile and click the Follow button. When someone sends you a friend request, they'll

automatically follow your public updates even if you haven't accepted their request. Facebook has a limit of 5,000 friends, but you can have unlimited followers,

Turn on the Follow button to allow more people to connect with you.

- Click the down arrow in the upper-right corner and select Settings.
- Click Followers on the left sidebar.
- Select Everybody from the Who Can Follow Me section (the default is Friends).

***Pro Tip:*** Since anyone who follows you can see your public updates, be sure to change your audience settings as needed to control privacy. You can choose which updates are public and which ones are only for your friends or a custom list of friends.

### **Share Page Posts Via Your Profile**

Personal profiles are getting much more visibility in the news feed than pages. If you have some key page posts that you would like to garner more reach, share them via your personal profile. The benefit of this is that the page name travels with the post and gives your page a boost in reach, introducing your friends and followers to your page, resulting in more fans.

### **Craft Multi-Product Ads**

Facebook now offers the ability to create multi-product (also known as carousel) ads, which allow you to rotate several products in one ad. Each product has its own title, image and landing page but all share the same text and social (like, comment and share) buttons. It's an excellent way to test which product gets the best response. While you're able to add two or more images to the multi-product ads, the best practice is to test to find out what number of displayed products maximizes your conversion rate.

There are a few things to bear in mind when creating a multi-product ad.

- ✓ Keep the headline and description text short so they will fit the screen. For best results, limit your headline to 25 characters and your link description to 30.
- ✓ As per other ads on Facebook, you cannot have more than 20% text in the image. You can measure the ratio using the Facebook Grid Tool.
- ✓ Remember, multi-product ads (both for desktop and mobile ads), work on a square dimension of 600 x 600 pixels so do not use large, wide images.
- ✓ Multi-product ads only run on the news feed and are not allowed in the right column of Facebook.

### ***Add Featured Videos***

Facebook is pushing for more video content and has hit 1 billion video views per day in September 2015. Whilst Facebook is already encouraging pages to post videos directly to the platform, one of Facebook's latest updates is encouraging pages to upload a featured video and show it prominently to people when they visit your Video tab. Setting up a featured video is easy, simply click Videos in the tab below your page's cover photo. Upload your chosen video if you have not already done so then click Add Featured Video. Featured videos effectively bring attention to your page.

### ***Create Video Playlists***

Relating to above, Facebook has also created video playlists, which should engage users to watch and share more content. To set up your video playlist simply click Videos in the tab below your page's cover photo (which you may find in the More section). Then select Create Playlist. Create a video playlist for your content then add a title and description and click Next. Select the videos you want to add to your playlist and click Next. Now, click and drag videos to order them and select Create Playlist. Your video tab will now display one section with your playlists and one section for all videos. This is an excellent way to group and share themed or topical video content.

### ***Explore Dynamic Product Ads***

Facebook dynamic product ads allow you to reach customers with relevant products and offers by automatically showing them ads for the products they are interested in. According to Facebook themselves this new feature is beneficial to businesses as it means you can;

- ✓ **Scale:** Promote all of your products with unique creative without having to configure each individual advert
- ✓ **Always on:** Set up your campaigns once and continually reach people with the right product at the right time
- ✓ **Cross-device:** Reach people with adverts on any device they use, regardless of their original touchpoint for your business
- ✓ **Highly relevant:** Show people adverts for products that they are interested in, in order to increase their likelihood to purchase

### ***Collect Testimonials and Reviews***

If you set up your Facebook page as a local business, you have the option to collect testimonials and reviews from your customers. Whilst you cannot encourage customers to review your business for incentives, you can help yourself by letting your customers know (by putting up signs at your shop or on your corporate literature for example) that they can review your business on your Facebook page. In addition to having a Facebook page full of reviews, you can then as an added bonus put the best reviews on your website. To add a review, click on the timestamp of the review, click the drop-down arrow at the top right and select the Embed Post option.

### ***Ask for Audience Feedback***

A survey not only encourages your audience to engage with your page, it also helps you discover important information about what your customers want from you and your page. You can, for free, poll your audience with a standard post to your page or use Facebook polling apps. Your choice depends on if you want to compile the answers yourself or have the app compile the answers for you, and if you want to collect additional information (such as email addresses) that you cannot collect publicly on your page.

### ***Encourage Your Fans to Use the See First Option***

Facebook now allows people to customise their news feed to prioritize updates from particular friends, groups and pages. This is great news for business pages with good content, as you can have your fans prioritise your posts. Educate your audience on how to select to see your posts first in their news feed. The easiest way is to go directly to your Facebook page, click the Liked button and then select the See First option.

### ***Create Saved Replies for Your Page***

Saved Replies can save you precious time if you have a standard message you frequently send as with this feature you are able to create generic replies for all of your frequently asked questions, then customise them before sending them out.

To create a saved reply:

- Click Messages at the top of your Page.
- Click any message.
- Click Manage Replies.
- Click Create Reply. Enter a reply title, then enter your message. You can also add personalization or an image to the reply. When you are finished, Click Save Reply.

### ***Use the Call to Action Button***

The call to action button is designed to bring a business's most important objective to the forefront of its Facebook presence. These buttons link to any destination on or off Facebook that aligns with a business's goals. You have multiple options with an unlimited amount of ways you can use them. The seven calls to action available are:

- Book Now
- Contact Us
- Use App
- Play Game
- Shop Now
- Sign Up
- Watch Video

### ***Use Testimonials***

Testimonials sharing real-life experience with your business go a long way in building credibility and can add a boost to your product sales. To encourage people to do this you need to get them excited about sharing their thoughts on your page.

### ***Create a Posting Road Map***

Many businesses start posting on Facebook without a content posting plan. As a result, their posts are often inconsistent and don't address the needs of their audience. A great tip is to create a road map for your posts covering various core topics. The more topics you add to your content bucket, the more variety you can offer to your audience. After you choose the topics you'll cover, go on to create a calendar that maps out what to post each day. If Start by creating a content calendar for one week in advance as a good rule of thumb.

### ***Write Your Text for Skim Readers***

A study by the National Centre for Biotechnology Information showed that people have an attention span of 8 seconds, which is 1 second less than that of a goldfish. If you apply that to Facebook, the first three to four words of your update are crucial to grabbing your audience's attention. Make it your priority to create compelling content in your Facebook updates.

### ***Consider Using Brand Hashtags***

Whilst the benefits of using Hashtags on Facebook are widely contested, I wouldn't dismiss the idea of hashtags altogether, before you have tested them for yourself. Using hashtags on Facebook can make sense if they are used correctly and contribute to your brand positioning. Is there a particular hashtag you use for your branding? Use hashtags when they make sense for your business. It is also effective and worthwhile to use Hashtags if you're posting about a trending topic.

### ***Customize Your Facebook Post Descriptions***

When you post a link on Facebook, it fetches the metadata automatically. Did you know, this can and should be edited to fit the post description and suit the current context? If you're republishing a post, tweak the metadata and add your own keywords. A great tip is to remember that Facebook posts are now searchable, so this is an excellent opportunity to add your keywords to the description too.

### ***Invite People who Have Engaged with your Post to Like your Page***

To get the most out of every single Facebook post, there's a hidden option to invite people who have engaged with your content on Facebook to Like your page. To access this feature, locate the wording underneath your post that shows how many people have liked it and the number of comments. Click

directly on that link and it will bring up the full list of people who have liked the post. On the right-hand side of the pop-up menu, it'll show which people currently like your page or not. If they do not, you can quickly invite them to Like your page directly.

## **Common Mistakes to Avoid**

### ***Posting Only About Yourself***

The essence of social media marketing is about creating social engagement. Therefore, you need to encourage interaction from your fans by sharing valuable and informative information and comments and listening to and joining in with conversations. It is vital that you do not simply use Facebook as an outlet to push your hard sales and promotional content. Whilst you have a presence as you will ultimately want to drive sales, your posts should not blatantly reflect this, rather you need to make people love your brand by sharing stories, responding to interactions and sharing information they are going to find useful and interesting.

### ***Posting Unrelated Content***

It is important that you do not treat your Facebook business page like your own personal page. Those that have chosen to like your page expect to get relevant, valuable and informative information regarding your business or industry therefore you need to create a content strategy that clearly shows the themes and topics you will be sharing and will ensure that every post has a relevant purpose and ensuring it is branded and directly written with your target audience in mind.

### ***Not Responding to Negativity***

Rather than simply deleting any negative comments you receive, as even the most universally loved businesses receive negative comments, view them as an opportunity to win over a customer offering help, guidance or even acknowledging where something went wrong. By dealing with negativity in an open and authentic way you can help build rapport and trust with your customers.

### ***Begging for or Buying Likes***

The more people that like you results in the more potential reach you have for your content as people interact with, like and share it. This leads many businesses to beg for likes or buy them from external sources rather than earning them through posting engaging content, interacting with others and giving incentives to encourage people to like you. Buying likes will bring no benefit to your business as whilst you may appear popular initially, those bought 'likes' are not going to be from real people that want to interact with you, so therefore you will lose out on important engagement and potential business

opportunities. Begging for likes also reflects badly on your businesses reputation online as it makes you appear untrustworthy and desperate.

### ***Connecting Your Facebook and Twitter Account***

Connecting your Facebook and Twitter feeds is not recommended as each platform requires a tailored use of content from the general layout of content to the best time to post, therefore you need to treat your Facebook and Twitter account as separate entities and share your content individually tailoring them to each as opposed to having Twitter automatically tweet the same message you posted on Facebook.

### ***Not Using Facebook Insights***

If you fail to analyse your Facebook analytics you are missing out on the opportunity to gain valuable insight as to whether your page is successful and is reaching your business objectives. It also helps you to determining which types of posts are most successful and which are not, which will help guide future content creation and ensure you make informed decisions that will ensure your pages future impact and effectiveness.

### ***Not Checking for Bad Links and Grammar & Spelling Errors***

You must remember that you represent your business with every post therefore it is vital that you review your content carefully before you share it. If you have included a link to an external site check that it is working and points to the correct page in addition to double checking your grammar, spelling and ensuring your post is clear and concise before you post it as a post that is grammatically incorrect, incoherent or riddled with spelling mistakes will affect your credibility and reputation negatively.

### ***Trying to Write Every Post for Everyone***

Remember when writing your posts, you need to do so with your target audience in mind as this will ensure that your content is focused, interesting and informative to those who are interested in you and your industry. Writing to please a generic mass of people will not help your cause to become a source of valued information and expertise in your industry, so always consciously aim to directly target and address the needs and wants of your audience within your posts.

## 31 Days of Facebook Content

- **Day 1: A Day in The Life of**  
What does your average morning look like? Share your routine and give your fans a glimpse into your interesting workday.
- **Day 2: Meet the Owner**  
Share a selfie and tell your fans a little more about how your brand came to be.
- **Day 3: Fill in the Blank**  
Give your audience a relevant, simple, question related to your industry or use it to gauge thoughts on future products/services.
- **Day 4: Your Mission**  
Share with your fans you reason for doing what you do and what makes your brand tick.
- **Day 5: Around the Office**  
Share an interesting visual of where you spend your working week.
- **Day 6: Share the Love**  
Write a post about a small business or a client you love to work with and let everyone know about what makes them so great. Remember to tag their page in the post!
- **Day 7: Your Most Popular Product/Service**  
Show off your most popular product or service and showcase the reasons why people love it so much.
- **Day 8: Monday Motivation**  
Share a quote that motivates you. If you use Canva, turn it into a nice, branded graphic so you have a good quality visual for added impact.
- **Day 9: Office Dog**  
Do you have an office dog? Take a funny photo and share their story. If you don't have an animal to share, try sharing something else such as a lucky mascot or favourite office mug etc.
- **Day 10: Show Your Giving Side**  
Do you support a local cause? Show your charitable side with a photo from a project or community drive that you attended/sponsored.
- **Day 11: Throwback Thursday**  
Reveal a photo from your past – the more silly or embarrassing the better!
- **Day 12: Positivity**  
Nothing beats a great word-of-mouth referral. Share a positive review you recently received from a customer.
- **Day 13: Goals**  
What ambitions are you working toward? Show your human side to your audience by sharing your journey on the way to achieving your goals.
- **Day 14: Your Process**  
Explain why your business is different and you are set apart from your competitors
- **Day 15: The Team**  
Gather your team for a photo opportunity to showcase the faces behind the brand.
- **Day 16: Your Hero**



Who do you admire? Share a picture and a few lines about how/why they inspire you.

- **Day 17: Fun Selfie Day**  
Take a selfie and share with your audience. Let them see the real you.
- **Day 18: Today I Learned...**  
Maybe it is a little-known fact about your field or a secret hack for doing your job better. Share something new you learned today.
- **Day 19: Sales Post**  
Remind your fans of your business offering.
- **Day 20: Share Your Latest Blog Post**  
Give your latest article more traction by sharing it with your Facebook audience
- **Day 21: Ask the Audience**  
Invite your followers to answer a customer question or vote for their favourite option e.g. "We're picking a name for [your new service package]! Which do you like best: A or B?"
- **Day 22: Humour**  
Share something that you have found funny. A funny article, photo or meme.
- **Day 23: Special Offer**  
Reward your loyal fans with a special offer.
- **Day 24: Fan Photo**  
Share a photo and short caption about one of your happy customers.
- **Day 25: How you Got Started**  
Take your fans back to where it all began and tell them how and when your brand was launched. Do a visual then and now comparison.
- **Day 26: Insider Tip**  
What enticing tips/fact would people be shocked or intrigued to learn about your industry?
- **Day 27: Share a Prediction**  
Tell followers about a trend you are keeping an eye on or a shift you expect to see in your line of work.
- **Day 28: Breaking News**  
Find a relevant story about the line of business you are in and share it along with your commentary.
- **Day 29: Freebie Giveaway**  
Pick a lucky winner to receive your product or service for free or a similar worthwhile prize.
- **Day 30: Behind the Scenes**  
Are you preparing for a conference or setting up for a sale? Show your fans the how you are getting ready for it.
- **Day 31: Coming Soon...**  
End on a high note by giving your fans a sneak peek of what is on the horizon for the month ahead.

## Measuring Success

Like any other marketing strategy, the success of your business Facebook page must be measured against your business objectives. Analysing your Facebook Insights will show you a wealth of information and help determine whether your page is having a measurable impact and whether the data is reflective of the overall goals of your business page.

### *Likes*

In the Likes section of your Insights, you'll find 3 core metrics:

- **Page Likes:** The total Page likes for each day, over a 28-day period
- **Net Likes:** The number of new likes minus the number of unlikes
- **Where Your Page Likes Happened:** The number of times your Page was liked, broken down by where it happened.

If you're looking to build brand awareness, monitor your Page likes and ensure that you're connecting with more of the people who matter to you by targeting your posts.

### **Top Tips:**

- You can select longer periods of time to see your metrics by using the chart at the top of the Page
- Click on a metric in the benchmark box on the right to compare data over time.

### *Reach*

In the Reach section of your Insights, you'll find 4 core metrics:

- **Post Reach:** The number of people your post was served to, broken down by paid and organic reach
- **Likes, comments and shares:** The positive engagement that helps you reach more people
- **Hide, Report as Spam and Unlikes:** Negative engagement will decrease the number of people you reach
- **Total Reach:** The number of people who were served any activity from your Page

**Top Tip:** Click or drag the Post Reach, Positive Engagement and Negative Engagement charts, and the pop-up will tell you which posts people were seeing during the selected time period. This helps you tie content to performance trends in your graph.

## **Visits**

In the Visits section of your Insights, you will find 2 core metrics:

- **Page and Tab Visits:** The number of times each of your Page tabs was viewed
- **External Referrers:** The number of times people came to your Page from a website outside of Facebook

**Top Tips:** Ensure that your Page is filled in with basic information so that you can be found by the people who matter most to you.

Update your Page with:

- **Category and description:** Add accurate details to help people find your Page when they search
- **Website and phone number:** Enter relevant business info so that people can find you online
- **Page web address:** You can request a web address like facebook.com/marketing, which makes it easy to find you. Update your Page web address here.

## **Posts**

In the Posts tab section of your Insights, you'll find 3 core metrics:

- **When Your Fans Are Online:** Shows you when the people who like your Page are on Facebook content
- **Post Type:** Displays the success of different post types based on average reach and engagement
- **Top Posts From Pages You Watch:** Gives you the engagement of posts from the Pages you're watching

**Top Tip:** Review your analytics regularly and schedule your posts to appear when your audience is most often online. You can also review your post types to see what resonates most with your audience, such as link posts or photo posts.

## **Video**

In the Visits section of your Insights, you'll find 3 core metrics:

- **Video Views:** Number of times your Page's videos were viewed for 3 seconds or more
- **30-second Views:** Number of times your Page's videos were viewed for 30 seconds or more. If a video is less than 30 seconds long, this counts when people view 97 per cent of it.
- **Top Videos:** Most-viewed videos on your Page watched for 3 seconds or more.

## ***People***

The People tab is divided into Your Fans, People Reached and People Engaged.

- **Your Fans:** View the gender, age, location and language of the people who like your Page
- **People Reached:** See the people your post was served to in the past 28 days
- **People Engaged:** Find out who has liked, commented on or shared your posts, or engaged with your Page, in the past 28 days. Once you know who your most engaged audience is, you can better tailor your Boosted Posts to them.

**Top Tip:** Target your Boosted Posts to your most engaged audience to keep them interested.

## ***Audience Engagement***

Is your audience interacting with your content? This could be by liking, commenting, reacting or sharing it. Engagement is about gauging how much people interact with you and the comments, shares and likes on your Page are a good way to measure engagement. Your aim should be to create conversation and if your readers are interacting with and responding to your posts then it is a good indication that you are engaging your readers making them more likely to respond and continue interacting with your page.

In terms of importance, you need to consider: A comment is more valuable than a like and a share is more valuable than a comment. When someone likes or comments on your content, it is not automatically shared with their followers. Facebook does take into account the popularity of your content, so it's more likely to be shared to other people if there are likes or comments. But shares are really what you want. With a share, it is a real endorsement of your content and your fan is specifically asking Facebook to share your content with their friends.

## ***Negative Feedback***

Tracking negative feedback is also an important part of the process as it can show you areas for concern. If fans are hiding your posts, un-liking your page or reporting your posts as spam, then you need to know. For the breakdown you have to download the excel report in your Facebook insights. If your average negative feedback number is too high, your posts will get less exposure over time so it is paramount that you look at what posts are getting you negative feedbacks and when, as you can then use this information to adjust your content or marketing efforts accordingly.

## ***Facebook Reactions***

Several years ago, Facebook introduced a new feature called "Reactions" allowing users to show their love, anger, laughter, and more to a piece of content on Facebook. Facebook Reactions are counted the same as likes, however, you can see the breakdown of reactions on an individual post by looking at the Post Details. Doing so will give you a greater insight into what your audience thinks of your content. Take note of people who "love" your content -- they are likely good brand evangelists. And remember that an "angry" may not mean they dislike the content, but instead the subject matter.

### ***Conversion***

Another piece of important information to track is how much traffic that your page brings to the rest of your website. In other words, how many fans are converted into potential customers? If a significant number of website visitors were referred from Facebook, you know that your posts are generating interest in your products or services and are possibly helping to drive sales. Tracking this number is the true measure of your Facebook marketing ROI as even if you're generating traffic and leads from Facebook, if they're ultimately not turning into customers you may have to re-evaluate how much time and effort you're putting into Facebook as a social media marketing channel.

### ***Likes and Unlikes***

How quickly are your fans growing? It's not all about the numbers but, if you're attracting the right audience and they are engaging with your content, then of course you want to see some fan growth. Tracking the rates at which you are liked and disliked by others is an important metric to regularly analyse as it will show you when you have performed well and the times when you haven't allowing you to establish what you did at those times that could have made others follow you or unfollow you. Learning from this information helps develop a more successful strategy as it will show you the areas in which your audience responds to better and which areas they didn't, allowing you to learn what your audience wants and then applying it to your future efforts.

### ***Engagement by Type of Content***

Different types of content perform differently on Facebook and it is vital that you ascertain which formats (status update, picture, video upload, a link to video etc.) perform better or worse with your audience. If there are certain types of content performing well, you'll want to share more of this type of content. Whilst it's always good to have a mix of content but you need to give more emphasis to the high-performing content.

### ***Audience Profile***

What type of audience are you building and attracting? You may have the most engaging content in the world, but you could be attracting the wrong audience. It is vital to keep track of your fans and ensure they are the ones you want to target.

### ***Audience Response Rate***

How quickly are you responding to comments? The more engaged you are with your audience, the more engaged they will be with your brand and your content. You need to regularly check how quickly you are responding to the comments on your Page, and make sure you aim to have a fast and high response rate.

# ***Facebook Maintenance Checklist***

## ***DAILY***

- ✓ Respond to any interaction - new messages, tags, likes and comments
- ✓ Engage with and contribute to Facebook groups
- ✓ Post at least one status update with original, relevant and interesting business content being aware of the best time to publish
- ✓ Check relevant hashtags that present opportunities to interact
- ✓ Go through news feed and get updated on news and insights and add your thoughts and comments to any relevant discussions and/or share relevant content
- ✓ Share at least 3 interesting status updates you find.
- ✓ Running Facebook Ads? Review stats twice daily.
- ✓ Locate 3 relevant pieces of content your audience would like and schedule it.
- ✓ Review Facebook Insights. Look for trends and emulate them.
- ✓ Listen for and respond to every lead immediately.
- ✓ Look to see if any new connections from other social media platforms have Facebook and like their Page
- ✓ During the week gather information and sources for the following weeks post(s)

## ***WEEKLY***

- ✓ **Check Your Insights:** Your analytics will help you figure out what your audience likes and does not like, so you can plan your future content better. It will also help alert you to any red flags early on. Regularly go through your analytics and look at What kinds of topics resonate best with your audience? What posts grab attention? Fan Growth?
- ✓ Actively find and 'like' any relevant other businesses and industry influencers

## ***MONTHLY***

- ✓ **Review Your About Page:** Is your About page up to date? If anything about you, your business, or any other content on your About page has changed since you published it, then you should update it.
- ✓ **Clean up Your Apps/Sidebar:** Regularly assess that all the elements in your page's sidebar are still timely, useful, and relevant. Keep it clean and useful by deleting extraneous elements and placing the best content in a prominent position.

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# TWITTER

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Twitter is one of the largest and most active social networks, with over 330 million active monthly users sending more than 500 million tweets a day. Often referred to as a micro blogging service as it limits your status updates to 280 characters, Twitter is a real-time information network that encourages its users to share and discover interesting content. Businesses have utilised the benefits of Twitter, recognising that it is one of the quickest ways to get a message out to people who may be interested in your products, services, ideas or events and also gives the chance to get real time feedback from customers. Perhaps the greatest feature of Twitter is the ability for your followers to share your tweets with their following at the click of a button, this is called a 'retweet' and is what cements Twitter as a successful word-of-mouth platform that can help your message reach an entirely new audience of prospective customers.

## What's good about Twitter?

- ✓ The Twitter feed is public which can help give your business greater exposure in web search results
- ✓ The site is like a public forum, so it is easy to build a community of potential customers
- ✓ It is a quick way to share links to content to help spread your message to a wide audience
- ✓ It is an open network so anyone can read your updates regardless of if they are a user or not

## What's not so good about Twitter?

- ✓ It's sometimes challenging to create a meaningful post in only 280 characters
- ✓ Building an active following takes time and requires a daily commitment to sharing content
- ✓ With so many identical-looking tweets, it's hard to make a single one stand out
- ✓ Users are very vocal, so if they have a problem, they will say so
- ✓ The lifespan of a tweet is very short

## Which Businesses Should be on Twitter?

Twitter is very popular tool for use as way of speaking to people directly and for quick, snappy updates. If you are a business that regularly and frequently shares breaking news, updates and likes to engage with fans directly then it is worthwhile having a Twitter presence.

## Need to Know Facts, Stats and Tips about Twitter

- There are 330M monthly active users.
- A total of 1.3 billion accounts have been created.
- 80% of active users access the site via mobile.
- 707 is the average number of followers.
- There are 500 million Tweets sent each day. That's 6,000 Tweets every second.
- It took 3 years, 2 months and 1 day to go from the first Tweet to the billionth.
- 77% of Twitter users feel more positive about a brand when their Tweet has been replied to.
- 58% of top brands have over 100,00 followers on Twitter.
- 92% of companies Tweet more than once a day, 42% Tweet 1-5 times a day, and 19% Tweet 6-10 times a day.
- The average Twitter user follows five businesses.
- 80% of Twitter users have mentioned a brand in a Tweet.
- 54% of users surveyed by Twitter reported that they had taken action after seeing a brand mentioned in Tweets (including visiting their website, searching for the brand, or retweeting content).
- The last two years have seen a 2.5x increase in customer service conversations on Twitter.
- 60% of consumers expect brands to respond to their query within the hour, but the average is 1 hour 24 minutes.
- 76% of consumers are likely to recommend the brand following friendly service.
- Companies using Twitter for customer service see a 19% lift in customer satisfaction.
- Tweets with images receive 18% more click throughs, 89% more likes, and 150% more retweets.
- There are currently 330 million monthly active users on the platform.
- Twitter users send out 500 million tweets per day.
- 88% of social advertisers use it. This makes it even more popular than Instagram.
- Percentage of Twitter users on Mobile: 80%
- 24% of all male internet users use Twitter, whereas 21% of all internet female users use Twitter.
- 71% of Twitter users are reading news there.
- Twitter is the number one platform for government leaders
- 75% of B2B businesses market on Twitter
- Only 3% of customers will @ you when they complain.
- Twitter ads are 11% more effective than TV ads during live events
- 40% of users say they've made a purchase because of an influencer's tweet
- The half-life of a tweet is 24 minutes. In other words, a tweet gets half its interactions in the first half hour, and then starts a long, slow decline.
- Brands tweeted an average of 122 times a month last year
- The best time to tweet is 3 p.m. on weekdays.
- Tweets with a GIF get 55% more engagement
- 93% of Twitter videos are viewed on mobile
- Tweets with video attract 10x as much engagement



# Why You Need Twitter For Your Business

Twitter might not be as large as Facebook, but it does have an extensive and constantly growing reach. Twitter places emphasis on sharing easily digestible newsworthy content and quick updates and exchanges. This makes it a refreshing social media platform that businesses have quickly utilized, using it extensively for making announcements and providing customer service.

## ***Connect with Customers***

Twitter is a great platform for connecting with your customers and providing customer service. It can be used beneficially for your business in that you can listen to and develop a relationship with your customers and gain feedback on how you can improve your product and services. In terms of providing value you can easily respond quickly and positively in real time to those that are interacting with you, showcasing your active customer service skills in responding to complaints, queries and general communications.

## ***Keep Up To Date With Your Industry and Competition***

Twitter will help you stay on top of your industry and market as it allows you to find out what people are saying in real time about a particular topic, enabling you to keep up to date with posts about your business, industry and your competition.

## ***It Shows Your Personality***

Using Twitter offers a real time, informal and chatty platform for your opinions, stories, humour and advice that gives your business a human face. People are more likely to purchase products or services from a business they feel like they already “know” and having a profile that you regularly update can help create a community and allow your followers to feel like they know your business.

## ***Networking***

Twitter is a great tool to use for networking as through the use of tweetups and general sharing of content you can meet and interact with many new businesses, customers and other individuals local to you and within your industry that will grow your network and potentially lead to new business opportunities and relationships.

## ***Brand Awareness***

Millions of people use Twitter actively on a daily basis and so it is likely that your existing customer base and potential customers and prospects are already users. From having the ability to display your brand through a customisable profile together with being able to engage and directly interact with your

followers who can easily share your content, Twitter becomes a powerful tool for helping small businesses to expand their reach and brand awareness across an active network.

### ***Monitor Your Reputation***

Knowing if people are talking about you and what they are saying is critical for your business and Twitter users are renowned for their frequent sharing of opinions (good and bad) about their experiences with businesses. Whether users are positive or negative about you on Twitter, ultimately you need to be there to address what they are saying either through a thank you or an acknowledgement of an issue and then a solution provided. By publicly responding to those that are talking about you, you tap into Twitter's use as a powerful customer service tool and you build trust with others as responding to them shows you are listening and genuinely interested in what they have to say and acting upon it will help you to better your business and experiences of customers.

*Still not convinced? Here are 7 more reasons why you need a Twitter account:*

- ✓ Free to use, though paid advertising opportunities are also available.
- ✓ Users will follow businesses they have previously purchased from.
- ✓ Allows you to answer questions, provide support and give news updates.
- ✓ Highly news-orientated, making it perfect for promoting fresh content.
- ✓ An invaluable platform for competitive research.
- ✓ Increase brand awareness and find new customers.
- ✓ Gain even more exposure with the use of popular hashtags.

## **Creating a Twitter Account and Getting to Grips with The Basic Lingo**

First impressions count, so it's important to establish your brand and business presence on Twitter and make it a lasting, positive one. Each element of your profile should accurately reflect your brand's purpose and values and compel a potential customer to follow you.

Here is a breakdown of the four key parts of a Twitter profile,

### **Your Profile and Header Photo**

For your profile photo you will typically use your logo or alternatively choose one that visually represents your brand and visually fits well in a small, circular space. The recommended dimensions are 400x400 pixels. Your photo doesn't just appear on your profile — it's the icon associated with every Tweet you post.

Your header photo is essentially a billboard so it should be ever-changing to showcase what's new in your business. This can be an upcoming launch or campaign, a new photoshoot or a new sale for example. Try to update it at least every quarter to keep things fresh and interesting. The recommended dimensions are 1500x500 pixels. You can upload photos in JPG, GIF, or PNG formats, the key is to make sure they are clear, high-quality, and create visual consistency.

### **Your Display Name and Account @name**

Your account @name is tied to everything you do on Twitter and is unique to you, so make it a good one. It can contain up to 15 characters and should be directly associated with the name of your business, or a very close match if you can. Your display name appears right above your @name and can be changed at any time although you should ideally keep this as the name of your brand or business. It can contain up to 50 characters.

### **Your bio**

Your bio is where you are essentially introducing yourself to the world. Within the allotted 160 characters you should be short and snappy, telling people what you do, what value you bring, and why they should follow you. There is the option to add a direct link to your website where you might send people to or if you have a simple landing page you can also use this link too. As a top tip, you should use a unique link to track visitors to your site from Twitter. Next there is the option to add your location, which you should do even if your presence is purely online. You might want to add your hometown, founding city, or places you ship to as this helps you reach and connect with local followers.

### **Your Pinned Tweet**

Twitter allows you to "Pin" a Tweet that stays at the top of your profile tweets stream. When people visit your profile, this is always the tweet they will see first. This is a great feature to highlight timely key messages you want people to see such as

- Your ongoing sale or promotion.
- Your latest product launch.
- A cause or charity you're supporting.
- A viral tweet

To pin a Tweet, simply click the down arrow at the top-right corner of the Tweet and select "Pin to your profile".

## ***PRO TIP: What to Use as Your Twitter Handle When Your Business Username is Taken***

*There are plenty of ways to amend your business name to create a strong, professional Twitter handle. Here are four ideas;*

- *Include Your Industry: A popular trend is to add a word or abbreviation for your industry, such as "app." As long as you keep it short this is an effective quick fix.*
- *Add Your Location: If your business is locally focused or has multiple business locations, you can add your location to your username. Just add your city, state, or country to the end of your Twitter handle.*
- *Use "Get" before your name: This has the added benefit of turning your Twitter username into a call-to-action.*
- *Add "HQ": as a really simple fix you can always opt to add "HQ," following your business name.*

## **Customising Your Twitter Profile**

Twitter doesn't give users a lot of customisation options, but it does allow for a little bit of personalisation. First, you need to upload a user icon. (Ideally one that is 400 pixels by 400 pixels and 2MB maximum). It can be photo or a logo it is up to you, just make sure that it is not left blank as the default Twitter user icon will be used which is an egg on a single-color background. Leaving it as such not only shows that you don't know how to use the platform, it also makes you look very unprofessional.

You can also add a header photo (similar to a cover photo on Facebook). This can be anything you feel represents you or your brand, just ensure it is a high-quality image, relevant/appropriate to your business and is eye catching. Twitter header photos should be 1500 pixels wide by 500 pixels high, and a maximum of 5MB.

Your Twitter page's layout cannot be changed, but for a little added visual customization, you can choose a theme colour. The theme colour you select will appear as an accent colour on your profile, mostly visible in links and when you hover over the navigation bar. You will also be able to see this theme colour from your home page, and not just on your profile.

## **Verified Accounts on Twitter**

Have you ever seen an account with a little blue and white checkmark next to the name? That badge shows that the account is verified by Twitter, meaning that the user is considered to be a key brand or individual. In the case of celebrities, verification is a way to differentiate between fake accounts impersonating the user and the authentic account actually run by that user. The requirements for verification are constantly being updated, but the website does not take things like follower count or tweet count into consideration. You cannot request to be verified — if Twitter thinks you meet the requirements, they'll find you and verify you eventually. Verified accounts benefit from access to special

features, like filters in their notifications page, access to account analytics that include data about their followers and engagement with their tweets, and more.

Verified Twitter users can lose their verified status if they violate the Twitter rules or terms of service, change their @handle, or protect their tweets. In this case, Twitter will automatically review the user's account again to make sure it is still eligible for verification.

## The Anatomy of a Tweet

Posting on Twitter is straightforward. It is mostly text-based, with a strict 280-character limit that forces your messages to be short and to the point.

***A tweet can also contain content formats other than just text;***

- **Links:** Sharing links to your content or content from other websites that is relevant to your brand is a great way to make your Twitter feed more interesting and engaging. A top tip is to use a link-shortening service like Bit.ly when adding links to your tweets to save more room for text.
- **Images:** Twitter also allows you to share images in your tweets. Simply upload the photo or image(s) you want to share in the Compose Tweet box. As with adding links, adding photo(s) will take away from your available character count, so plan accordingly.
- **GIFs:** GIFs are essentially moving images taken from videos, and they are very popular and all over the Internet. Uploading GIFs in your tweets is a great way to incorporate meme marketing in your Twitter strategy.
- **Videos:** You can also share Vine videos and YouTube videos to Twitter, simply by sharing links. As with adding links or photos (or GIFs) to your tweets, adding a video takes up some of the character count available to you.
- **Polls:** Polls allow you to pose a question to your followers and track their votes. To add a poll to your tweet, click the Poll button at the bottom of the tweet composition box and fill in what you want the voting choices to be. Polls have a default of at least two choices, but you can add up to two more (for four choices total.) You can also fill out how long you want your poll to run for in days, minutes and hours.

## Interacting With Others on Twitter

There are several ways to interact with other Twitter users, both publicly and privately.

- **@mentions:** The easiest way to reach a Twitter user is by tagging that user's @handle in your tweet. This will notify the other person, while other users who see the tweet can click on the @handle to see the person you are talking about. Top Tip: If you want to start your tweet with the other user's @handle, you need to place a period before the @ symbol if you want it to

show up on your feed. This is not necessary however if you do not care if other users see your Tweet.

- **Likes:** If you like a particular tweet but do not want or need to respond to it, you can favourite it by clicking the heart button under the tweet. Your likes are stored in a list on your Twitter page that is visible to you and anyone who visits your profile.
- **Retweets:** Retweeting allows you to share what other Twitter users post so that your followers can see those posts as well. There are two methods of retweeting: You can click the retweet button under the original tweet, which will share the tweet in its original form on your feed, or you can quote the original tweet. When you retweet, it will show up on your feed with the other user's profile picture and @handle. To quote a tweet or manually retweet, simply highlight, copy and paste the tweet into the compose tweet box, and write "RT" and the user's @handle before the tweet. You can also put quotes around the tweet, though some users do not. Quoting a tweet instead of directly retweeting it allows users to add their own thoughts to it or share it with other users by tagging their @handle in it.
- **Direct messages:** To privately interact with other Twitter users, the social network allows you to direct-message people (usually referred to as a DM on Twitter). Direct messaging used to be closed so that only users who were following each other could use the feature, but now everyone has the option to make their DMs open to the public.

## Twitter Hashtags

A hashtag is, as defined by the Oxford dictionary "A word or phrase preceded by a hash sign (#), used on social media websites and applications, especially Twitter, to identify messages on a specific topic" and its first known use was back in 2008.

Hashtags are searchable on Twitter and therefore are a great way to make the content you share on the platform visible to users beyond your own followers. There are many highly popular hashtags that generally all active Twitter users are familiar with, like #FollowFriday (or #FF), which encourages your followers to reach out to other users you admire or work with, and #ThrowbackThursday (or #TBT), which encourages users to post vintage or childhood photos and memories. You can also create your own hashtags to draw attention to your brand. Just make sure the hashtags you use are relevant to your business.

Many Twitter users add their hashtags at the ends of their tweets, but you can add hashtags anywhere you want in the text. When used correctly, hashtags can be an effective way to encourage engagement and get discovered on Twitter. With this in mind, there are some key tips to consider before you start tweeting with them.

### Do

- Make it easy to remember and spell. Don't leave room for possible typos.

- Do your research. Check and see what hashtags people are already using when talking about your brand/ industry and get involved with those.
- If you are creating your own hashtag, make sure to check if it is already being used.
- Be realistic and give people a reason to use your hashtag. Whether it is an actual prize or just recognition in the form of a Retweet, your audience will respond better when there is something in it for them.
- Partner with influencers as they can help gain exposure and visibility for your hashtag.

### Don't

- Over hashtag. Stick to using only one to two relevant hashtags per Tweet.
- Expect your brand slogan to immediately become a popular or even usable hashtag. A hashtag is meant to be inclusive, shareable, and discoverable. If it does not naturally fit within a Tweet, then don't try to force it as it will lose its intended purpose.
- Expect people to use your hashtag without a reason or incentive.
- Neglect to clearly communicate what your hashtag means and why someone would want to include it in their own Tweet.
- Use all CAPS LOCK in your hashtag.

## BONUS SECTION: Using Hashtags on Other Social Media Channels

Hashtags may have started on Twitter but now most social media platforms support hashtags. Hashtags give your brand more exposure so you can spread the word about your product to a massive audience. In addition, when you use it on multiple times on different channels, people will easily remember your hashtag.

- **Twitter:** Using hashtags on Twitter is vital for growth. Posts with hashtags get twice as much engagement as posts without hashtags, according to Buffer. Tweets with two hashtags get the highest engagement, and engagement falls as the number of hashtags increase.
- **Facebook:** Use 2 hashtags on Facebook try one popular hashtag and one custom hashtag for your brand but proceed with caution, yes, they allow hashtags and yes, people use them. Way too much. In fact, three months after adopting the practice research that used EdgeRank information found that Facebook posts with hashtags had less engagement than those without.
- **Instagram:** It allows up to 30 hashtags, however, keep it to no more than 11 per post for the highest level of engagement. Instagram is an outlier when it comes to hashtags. While the other sites give you a diminishing return if you use more than one or two, on Instagram the rule is the more the merrier. However, be careful not to use highly popular hashtags. Use niche hashtags revolving around your industry and limit your use of hashtags to 15-20 within a given hour.
- **Pinterest:** Use only 2 hashtags, it's a category of search so use your unique hashtag to help pinners to find relevant content.

**Top Tip:** Search the hashtag before you use it. Check each of the social media networks to make sure that your hashtag isn't being used for the wrong reason. Also, ensure that you don't choose something that can be interpreted in a different way. It is worth making sure that another brand isn't using hashtag specifically for their own promotion as well. Before using a hashtag, always you need to search to see if other people are using it and what they are saying.

## Trending Topics on Twitter

Trending topics are any topics that Twitter users are talking about at a very high rate. Often, these trending topics are hashtags, but they can also be words or phrases related to the subject. You can see the current trending topics on your Twitter home page in the trends box on the left-hand side.

When you click on a trending topic, it'll take you to a search page where you can view what people are saying about the topic, along with photos and related users. At the top of the page, you can select to view all of the tweets being shared, or just the top tweets — the ones getting the most interactions.

Twitter users can customise the trends box to show trending topics in different locations. For example, if you were in Birmingham, you could set it to only show you what's trending in Birmingham. You could also set it to show you trending topics in the United Kingdom overall, or around the world.

Topics become trending for a few reasons. Most commonly, trending topics result from breaking news or commonly talked about topics in the media. For example, if the UK election results were announced, you might see the candidates' names as trending topics.

Trending topics can also come about when large groups of Twitter users work together collectively to get a certain hashtag or phrase trending. For example, this is often the work of celebrity-obsessed fans, so it's not uncommon to see things about One Direction, Justin Bieber Taylor Swift in the trending section.

Done right, trending topics can be a great way for brands to get noticed. Only use trending topics in your tweets if those topics are genuinely relevant to your brand, and make sure you use them appropriately.

## Twitter Lists

Twitter offers its users the ability to make lists of other users they find interesting. This gives users another way of tracking what people post, except with lists, you don't have to be following the users you include to see their posts regularly.

Lists are handy if you want to better organize your following list. For example, you might make a list of known people in your industry and name it "Industry Influencers," or if you had an interest in something



like photography and want to track users in your area who tweet about those things, you could make lists of "Manchester Photographers."

Creating lists is simple, just click your user icon in the top navigation bar so that the drop-down menu appears and click Lists. From there, you can see two tabs: lists you're a member of (i.e., lists you've been added to) and lists you're subscribed to (the lists you've created). You'll see a Create List button below the Subscribed to and Member Of links. When you create a list, type in the name you want to give the list and a short description, and then choose whether you want the list to be publicly visible or private (visible only to you). If you make your lists public, the users you add to it will be notified. Once you're done, simply click Save List. After the list has been created, you can add users to it by clicking the gear button next to the follow button on their page, selecting "Add or remove from list" and then selecting the list you'd like to add them to.

## Live Tweeting

Live tweeting is when a user tweets his or her reactions to a live event as it is happening. Live tweeting most commonly occurs with TV shows and televised events, however. If you have ever been watching a TV show and seen a hash-tagged phrase overlaid on the bottom of the screen, it's because the programme wants to encourage its viewers to tweet about the show as they watch. It is also popular with brands when they throw events and want their attendees to live tweet while they are there, the brand will often create its own individual hashtag to use and share with the invite list so that others can follow around.

The same goes for major televised events like the Brit Awards. It is not uncommon during events such as these to see the trends box filled with related topics — for example, in the case of the Brits, it wouldn't be surprising to see the official awards show hashtag along with the names of celebrities that win major awards.

## Twitter Chats

A Twitter chat is when several Twitter users get together online to discuss a specific topic. To do so, they create a hashtag which participants then incorporate into each of their related tweets. Twitter chats are a great way to engage followers and/or get a topic trending. Twitter chats are straightforward, but they do require a decent and active follower base to be successful.

Usually, one Twitter user will host a Twitter chat at a specific time and prepare specific questions and discussion points. The host will tweet out the questions and other participants will respond with their thoughts. Twitter chats usually last about an hour. They are a great way to show how active you are on social media and to get your followers (and their followers) engaged and asking questions or sharing their advice.

## A Guide to Fleets

Fleets are for sharing momentary thoughts – they help start conversations and only stick around for 24 hours. Because a Fleet is only visible for a day, your content can be more casual, conversational and authentic.

A Fleet may contain photos, GIFs, videos, links, and text. Use them to share personal in-the-moment thoughts with your followers from live Fleeting an event, sharing a funny meme, showcasing upcoming products or last-chance purchases or use them to simply start a conversation with your audience. With Fleets, you can also encourage fan participation and engagement by asking them to share their own content — which you can share through additional Fleets — or by allowing them to reply directly to yours.

Anyone who can see your full profile can see your Fleets too. You can see who has viewed your Fleets, including accounts with protected Tweets, by clicking into your Fleets and tapping on the 'Seen By' text at the bottom. Also, anyone who can send you a Direct Message can reply to your Fleets. If you want to reply to a Fleet, tap on it to send a Direct Message or emoji reaction to the author; replying or reacting to a Fleet starts a conversation in your Direct Messages.

Fleets appear above the Home timeline. To create a new Fleet, start by tapping your profile image and:

- Tap the Fleet compose icon.
- Compose your message. You can use the text editor to add media to your Fleet, to do this;
  - Tap the screen to bring up the keyboard and toolbar.
  - Tap the Align button to format the text centre, left, or right.
  - To change the text to bold, tap the B button.
  - To highlight your text, select the Highlight button.
  - The colour wheel will change the text and highlight colour tap the icon to change the text.
  - To move or resize the text, image, or emoji, use two fingers to pinch to resize or move the media.
  - Tap the circle icon at the bottom left of the screen to change your Fleet's background colour.
- When you are happy, simply tap the Fleet button to post the Fleet to your profile.

## Questions to Help Form a Successful Twitter Marketing Strategy

Before you jump in and start tweeting there are several key strategic elements you must consider in order to create a Twitter marketing strategy that will ensure your Twitter profile is going to be in line with your business objectives and ultimately be a successful addition to your social media marketing strategy.

### ***Why is my Business on Twitter? What are my Goals?***

One of the first things you must do is determine what you want your Twitter profile to achieve for your business. Whether you want to use it to support sales by giving potential customers useful information in the form of relevant news updates or use it as an outlet for customer service or to build your brand by providing content that supports your offering, having clear objectives for your profile help optimise its reach and impact. Having clear goals and objectives will guide and dictate how to develop other parts of your Twitter strategy so it is vital that you pick realistic, achievable and effective objectives for your business.

#### ***Common Twitter Marketing Goals***

- Grow an Engaged and Relevant Following
- Generate Brand Awareness
- Generate Sales and Business Leads
- Customer Service Tool
- Establish Authority

### ***Who Will be in Charge of Managing my Twitter Account?***

Whether you will maintain your Twitter in house or hire an external social media manager or agency, you need to establish who will be maintaining your account and ensure that they are the right person who will present your brand well and effectively across Twitter. Part of this process is also ensuring the person running your account has a good understanding of your branding from the voice you want portrayed to how they interact and deal with queries/complaints etc. as they need to be able to confidently ensure they can always represent your brand.

### ***Is my Target Market on Twitter, Who am I Going to be Tweeting to?***

In addition to determining your objectives, having a clear idea of your target readers is paramount. Firstly, you need to ascertain whether your target market is actually on Twitter in the first place and also doing your research and knowing who you are tweeting too is key to being able to tailor your tweets around content that maximises interest and engagement from your readers.

### ***What am I Going to Tweet? Have I Got a Content Strategy in Place?***

Creating a content strategy is a key part of your success on Twitter as it will give you clear and consistent guidelines on vital aspects such as what to post, when and what voice you will portray. Deciding on what major content categories you want to include regularly helps you to stay focused and maintains a clear direction for your tweets to go to ensure your content is in line with your business goals and is targeting reader's needs. Having a clear understanding of the frequency you will be posting is also paramount to ensure it is in line with your wider social media strategy. An important part of the content strategy development is also choosing the right 'voice' to portray for your business. Your tweets should reflect your personality as Twitter is a great way to show a 'human' side to your business. It is important to have

an idea of what voice you want for your profile as it needs to be consistently applied across all your posts, especially if your profile is going to be managed by several different contributors. In general, many find there are several key characteristics of successful tweets such as showing a personality and being contextually relevant that ensure tweets are as engaging and interesting as possible. Put simply, avoid generic corporate speak and replace it with your own unique voice and customers will be more drawn to and engage with you on Twitter.

### ***How am I Going to Measure my Success on Twitter?***

To measure the success of your Twitter presence you need a solid understanding of the initial objectives you want to achieve for your business from using Twitter. Whether you want to use Twitter as a customer service tool or to drive traffic to your blog or website, having a clear vision of why you are using Twitter will automatically shed light on what metrics and other data should be looking at in order to measure your success. An important part of measuring your success is also learning what works and what does not. As your strategy develops you may find you need to adjust your objectives so it is vital you do not neglect your analytics as they will help you to build a solid, successful and competitive Twitter presence.

## **Tweeting: What, and How Often?**

***Now it's time to start tweeting, there are several fundamental basics to follow to ensure you create powerful and engaging tweets.***

With over 5,700 tweets posted every second and each one having an average life span of 3 hours, it can be hard to make your tweet stand out from the crowd. For small businesses without an already established brand this is an even more difficult task to manage. There are however several guidelines available to aid you in what to tweet, but always remember these four key things;

### ***Never Go For The Direct Sell***

When you first start tweeting, it may be tempting to go with the direct sale approach tweeting information about how wonderful your business is and all the things you sell or offer. This however is not a successful approach and, in most cases, will see you viewed as a spammer and will quickly lead to people unfollowing you or not following you at all. To avoid making this mistake you must strike a balance between subtle business tweets and ones centred on customer engagement, with a favourable emphasis on the latter.

### ***Say Something Interesting and Useful***

Write your tweets with your target audience in mind so rather than trying to appeal to a generic wider audience, write content that contains specialised information and analysis that those interested in your

services or in your sector would read. For ideas simply think about questions you had when starting out in your industry or flag up interesting case studies or advice. By openly giving out advice and information you will become an online repository of specialist knowledge and this will attract the attention of your target audience.

### ***Try to Include Some Form of Media Within Your Tweet***

A common mistake made with tweeting is not including some form of media content such as a relevant video or picture that can lead tweets to look uninviting and not capture a reader's attention. To avoid making this mistake make sure to tweet insightful and valuable content that your readers will want to read and looks visually appealing also. Tweets with some form of media such as a photo or link always get more clicks, so it is vital that you try to include some form of relevant media.

### ***Be Creative***

People always respond better to something that is new, fresh and clever so always brainstorm ideas in the mind-set of producing something that is creative and breaks the mould of other generic tweets. You are competing in the fast-paced and growing industry of social media marketing, so you need to make yourself stand out and give potential customers a compelling reason to choose you over your competitors.

*Engagement on Twitter is reflected in five forms: retweets, favourites, clicks, lists and @mentions. Here are several ways to create the right type of customer engagement with your posts;*

### ***The Humanising Tweet***

Twitter offers an informal and chatty platform for your opinions, stories, humour and advice that gives your business a human face. These types of tweets, whether they are photos of staff, office celebrations etc., are designed to show your audience that there exist real people behind your brand and helps them to connect with you and get to know you and your story better.

### ***The Promotional Tweet***

By giving discounts or other benefits to your Twitter followers, you give them a reason to follow you and as a result acquire a new audience that will then see your other business updates. Common twitter promotions offer a free gift or service upon receiving a certain number of retweets or followers.

### ***The Answering Replies Tweet***

Twitter is a great tool for customer service but if you fail to monitor and reply to what is being said about your company, you are making a big mistake. Only when you engage with your customers and respond appropriately will you get the full value of Twitter as a customer service tool. This does not mean that you must respond to every negative statement, but when there is a real issue or if a person has a specific question or wants to praise you, you need to address it quickly and honestly.

### ***The Relevant Industry News, Trends or Events Tweet***

To build your authority within your industry you need to act as a resource for people who come to you for relevant and up to date industry advice/news/ trends/ opinions and any other relevant articles that you know would be of interest to your target audience.

### ***The Question and Participation Tweet***

You will get a lot more out of tweeting if you enable and encourage your customers to respond to what you write. Beyond asking questions with your tweets, you also need to remember the conversation is two-way, so respond to the comments readers leave and you are likely to develop a community on your Twitter profile that can help turn your customers into fans who will promote your products and services and provide you with quality feedback.

### ***The Get to Know the Business Tweet***

Successful tweets often share something with followers that they cannot get anywhere else, something that is interesting and beneficial that lets them know more about a business. People are more likely to purchase products or services from a business they feel like they already “know” and having a profile that you regularly update can help create a community and allow your readers to feel like they know your business.

### ***The Relevant Resources and Links Tweet***

If you regularly read industry news and find interesting articles, share them with your audience and add your own thoughts. This will go a long way in developing your reputation as a thought leader and as a source where people can come to find valuable and interesting industry insights.

### ***The Fun Tweet***

Sharing updates that are entirely business related all the time can lead to a monotonous twitter presence and may lead to unfollows as people think you are just trying to hard sell to them all the time. Instead look to strike a balance between business updates and ones that are fun, light and full of humour as you will attract followers and go a long way towards humanising your business.

### **Miscellaneous Tweets**

There are many options for what information you can tweet to your followers and as you move forward you will find the content that works best for you and your target audience. Ultimately, share what you feel is interesting and relevant and will interest your readers and encourage them to engage with you and share your content. For example, many businesses use Twitter to tweet quotes that inspire them, promote a charity the business supports and to share the news if the company has won an award, received a great review, garnered some major press, or has a great testimonial.

*Although it takes some experimentation to find the best schedule for you, there are two things that should always be considered and will dictate your tweeting schedule; your company goals and what your audience wants.*

In general, 5-15 great content tweets per day are a good general amount to sustain an active presence on Twitter. This however may vary depending on what works best for your company, goals and readers so it is important to experiment to find a tweeting schedule that works for you. For example, if your goal is to become a cutting-edge information resource, you might be continually posting breaking news and events in your sector or industry, on the other hand if your main audience is mostly interested in technical or behind-the-scenes details, you will probably tweet information less often. So, the first step to determining your ideal tweeting frequency is to find the perfect balance of what you want and what your audience wants.

To maximise the benefits of having Twitter you need to ultimately ask yourself, Can you keep this schedule consistently? Can you always tweet high-quality content at this rate? And will you have enough content for this schedule? Once you have discovered the best times to tweet, being consistent with your publishing schedule has the benefit of encouraging new followers and the potential for retweets that will enhance your brand and impact.

## **How to Write an Effective Tweet**

Twitter currently supports five formats that you can use to create your social media updates:

- Status Update
- Link Share
- Photo Upload
- Video Link Share
- GIF

While it took three years, two months, and a day to reach the billionth tweet shared, it now only takes one week to send one billion tweets. To help you get noticed among all this noise, take note of the following tips:

### ***Start with a Relevant Following***

The key to a successful presence and indeed tweet begins with you having built up a relevant and engaged following that wants to engage with you. If you only followed others in the hope of gaining an easy follow back or bought followers, then you are wasting your time as both of these types of followers are useless for your business as they will not engage with you and are likely to never become customers. Instead, look to build a relevant organic following by searching industry hashtags and follow those users that appear, include a follow me on Twitter link on your website and blog, tell your existing business contacts and customers you are on Twitter and utilise your other social networks to bring audiences over from your other networks.

### ***Establish Your Objective for the Tweet***

Every tweet you share needs to have a purpose. Whether you want to create interest in your latest blog post, promote a new product or service or generate engagement through a Q&A, knowing your objective will dictate and affect every aspect of what you include in your tweet from the links you'll include, where they go, the tone of the tweet, the CTA you include, right through to how you will measure the success of your tweet.

### ***Create a Headline That Grabs Attention***

At any given time, there could be hundreds of tweets in your target audience's Twitter feed and to ensure you stand out people need to be given a good reason to click on your link which is why creating a well-written, clear and attention-grabbing headline is vital. Before you tweet simply ask yourself if you would share and click on that tweet based on its headline and if you would not then you need to change it.

### ***Keep the Tweet the Optimal Length***

The limit for characters within your tweets is 280; however, you do not have to use them all. Rather it is suggested that the optimal length for a Tweet is around 70-100 characters as this makes your tweet short enough to digest within a few seconds and is the right length for anyone who wants to retweet and add on a couple words for their own comment.



### ***Include Some Form of Media***

To make your tweets attract more attention it is recommended that you include some form of media content such as a photo or video as this makes the tweet more interesting and appealing. So, make sure to tweet and share insightful, informative and valuable content that your readers will want to click on and looks visually appealing also.

### ***Pay Attention to Spelling and Basic Grammar***

You represent your brand with every tweet you post so do not leave your audience with a negative and unprofessional opinion of your business by not taking the time to proofread for spelling errors and not checking your general grammar. Ensure your tweet is clear, concise, the punctuation use is correct, you have no typos and you clearly spell out your words instead of using abbreviations to save characters as many followers may not be familiar with certain abbreviations.

### ***Include a Clear Call to Action***

Ensuring you include a clear call to action in every tweet you post ensure that each tweet will be purposeful for your business. Whether you want to direct the reader to a new blog post, a product page or to a newsletter signup page ensure you make it clear and concise to the reader what the next step is that you want them to take.

### ***Utilise Relevant Trends and Hashtags***

Hashtags are a great tool for connecting to a wider audience so ensure you utilise them within your tweets. For ideas you can relate them to the content you are posting to enhance the tweet or for content ideas you can do a search within your business community to see what is trending and if relevant, add your thoughts. It is important not to jump on and use any hashtag that is trending as many will not be relevant for your business, rather the key is to be selective and only utilise those that are relevant and will enhance your business in some way.

You can also create and promote a hashtag campaign yourself to help revive your community and spark conversation around your brand with both old and new customers. To start a hashtag campaign, decide on the goal of your campaign and how it will relate to your customers. Then research what your audience is talking about to come up with a hashtag that they will identify with.

### ***Using Links? Ensure They've Been Shortened***

Using a link shortening tool such as bit.ly to shorten your URL's not only helps you easily gain more characters to use, but it also provides valuable insights into how the link is being shared which is essential for future content creation and link selection.

**Top Tip:** Try placing links in the middle of the tweet. Dan Zarrella found that placing links roughly 25% through a tweet leads to a higher click through rate than including the link at the very end. This is probably due to the fact that most tweets include the link automatically at the end, so anytime there's a variance in a user stream, the tweet catches our attention more.

### ***Actively Learn From the Tweets of Others***

Be active in looking through your feed and looking at the tweets that stand out for you as this can give you valuable tips that can help guide you in creating better tweets in the future. To those tweets that stand out to you and made you click on them analyse why and look to what makes that tweet so good then apply it to your own tweets. By consistently looking at others and learning you will gain the necessary knowledge to know what makes a great tweet that your audience cannot resist which in turn will make you gain more followers, respect, authority and ultimately make your Twitter presence more successful.

### ***Optimize Twitter Publishing Times***

The shelf life of a link on Twitter is only 2.8 hours. To get the maximum impact of each tweet, you need to publish your tweets at optimal times. According to recent data from Kevan Lee at Buffer...

- the most popular time to tweet: noon to 1 p.m. local time
- the early morning hours is when tweets receive the most clicks, on average
- the fewest tweets are sent between 3 and 4 a.m.

These are a general guide however as through your own testing and regular assessments of your analytics, you will come to learn the most effective publishing times for you.

## **Advertising Basics on Twitter**

With hundreds of millions of tweets sent per day, it can be easy for your brand's Twitter marketing to get lost in the noise. Twitter ads can help you get your message in front of the users who are most likely to be interested in your business and its offering. Twitter offers very user-friendly ad formats, so it's a great time to consider running your first Twitter ad.

- **Expand your influence** - With Twitter Ads, you can get more likes, amplify your message, and get more people talking about your business
- **Connect with new audiences** - People on Twitter are looking for great content from the people, businesses, and brands they're interested in. Help them discover you.
- **Budget Control** - There's no minimum budget required for Twitter Ads. Pay only for the specific results you need, such as new account followers or sending traffic to your website.

## Types of Twitter Ads

Using Twitter is free, but if you'd like to pay to promote your account on the platform, there is a robust selection of advertising options available to you.

- **Promoted tweets:** Promoted tweets are simply tweets that an advertiser pays to display to people who are not already following them on Twitter. Like regular tweets, they can be retweeted, liked, and so on. They look just like regular tweets, too, except that they have a label that says "Promoted." Promoted tweets appear in targeted users' timelines, on user profiles, at the top of search results, and in the Twitter mobile and desktop apps.
- **Promoted Accounts:** Promoted Accounts (also known as Followers campaigns) allow you to promote your Twitter account to targeted Twitter users who don't yet follow you but might find your content interesting. Promoted Accounts are displayed in potential followers' timelines, as well as in the Who to Follow suggestions and search results. They include a Follow button and are clearly identified as Promoted.
- **Promoted Trends:** Trending topics on Twitter are the most talked about subjects on the social network, appearing on users' timelines, on the Explore tab, and on the Twitter app. Promoted Trends allow you to promote a hashtag at the top of that list. When Twitter users click on your Promoted Trend, they see an organic list of search results for the topic, with a Promoted tweet from you at the top of the list. As people pick up on your hashtag and start using it themselves, you can gain additional organic exposure that increases the reach of your campaign. Currently, Promoted Trends are not available for advertisers using Twitter's self-serve options. You can find out whether you're eligible to work with a Twitter Sales representative to purchase Promoted Trends by sending a direct message to @TwitterAdsHelp.

In addition to these options, Twitter has a host of other marketing tools designed to help advertisers improve their campaigns.

- **Twitter Amplify:** Twitter Amplify is a tool that allows advertisers to share real-time television content that they can integrate with their brand or sponsors. It is designed to help brands reach users beyond their current followers by delivering content to targeted audiences.
- **Promoted Video:** While Twitter Amplify gives brands the ability to share videos from TV programs and other broadcasts, Promoted Video opens up the possibilities to any kind of video. Promoted Video is different from sharing a YouTube video in your tweets — while both methods allow you to play a video in a tweet, Promoted Video content is hosted directly by Twitter and is only available as a paid marketing tool.
- **Mobile App Promotion:** This option lets advertisers target and reach their desired audiences via mobile devices to drive app downloads. Advertisers can create a custom image and app description for use in the ad, and target users by their location, gender, language and mobile platform. The tool also features a unique measurement system so advertisers can see how their campaigns impact app installs, purchases and registrations.

### **BONUS TIP: Twitter Promote Mode**

If you're new to social media advertising, you're not sure how much you can afford to spend, or you have a very small team with limited time, you might want to consider Twitter Promote Mode. Twitter Promote Mode costs a flat rate of £ 79 per month. Once enabled, all you have to do is tweet as you normally would and each day, Twitter will select up to your first 10 tweets that meet its quality requirement and promote them to your selected audience. Retweets, Quote Tweets, or replies will not be promoted. According to Twitter on average, accounts will reach 30,000 additional people and gain 30 followers each month, but performance may vary.

## **How to Advertise on Twitter: A Step-by-Step Guide**

**Set up Your Twitter Ads Account** - If you've never used Twitter ads before, you'll need to set up an account. Just log into your Twitter account, then head to [ads.twitter.com](https://ads.twitter.com). Enter your country and time zone, then click Let's go.

**Choose Your Objective** - Decide what you want your campaign to achieve whether it's to raise awareness of a specific Tweet, attract new followers, send traffic to your website, or increase engagement. With Twitter Ads, you can launch campaigns and tailor ads based on your business goals and what's happening with your brand right now

- Awareness - Promote your Tweets and maximize your reach.
- Tweet engagements - Promote your Tweets and get more Retweets, likes, and replies.
- Followers - Promote your account and grow your Twitter following.
- Website clicks - Promote your website and get more traffic.
- App installs - Promote your mobile app and get more downloads.

**Define Your Ad Group** - Ad groups are how you want to spend your money. Here, you can set budget, targeting, and placement for each of your campaigns. One campaign can have many ad groups and an ad group can contain one or more Tweets. For your first Twitter ads campaign, you are probably best sticking to one ad group. As you get more comfortable with Twitter ads, you can split up your campaign to target different audiences, use different creative, or test different budgets and timing.

**Bidding** - Twitter Ads run in an auction. Decide how much you will pay for each interaction, such as a new follower or a click to your website. If you want to control the bid amounts yourself, the interface will also show you suggested bids based on what others are paying. Or use automatic bidding, which determines the best bid cost based on your budget and goals. This is a good way for new Twitter advertisers to get started and learn how Twitter bidding works.

**Define Ad Creative and Placement** - Select the Tweets you want to focus on in your campaign. Twitter will show you a list of your existing tweets that you can choose to promote. If you prefer, you can choose to create a new tweet specifically for your ad. Include strong call-to-actions, like “sign up” or “start today.” Avoid #hashtags or @mentions in your copy so that your audience does not click away from your ad.

**Target Your Audience** - Twitter offers a number of targeting options to help you choose the right audience for your ad and maximize your budget. Select geographic areas, the followers of a notable account, or target people's interests. The section called Audience features allows you to target based on specific user characteristics like events, interests, and behaviours, and even the specific keywords and TV shows users tweet about. To help guide you, the interface provides an estimated audience size that changes as you add more Twitter ads targeting options to your campaign.

**Launch Your Campaign** - Finally, review all the options you’ve selected, and click Launch campaign to launch your ad!

**TOP TIP:** Quick Promote is a great alternative method to employ if you already know which tweet you want to promote and you don’t want to get into detailed targeting options. This easy alternative lets you set up a Twitter ad with just two clicks.

### Tips to Get the Most Out of Your Budget

- People scroll through Twitter quickly, so you need get to the point fast. Don’t assume you have to use all 280 characters—**short and to-the-point ad copy is a good way to go on Twitter!**
- **If you include a link, be sure it’s clear what the link points too:** for example, an article, a product or a download. In doing so, you’ll avoid paying for clicks from people who are not interested in the specific item you’re linking to.
- You should also **make sure that your Twitter bio and profile page are up-to-date** and in good shape as users may click through to your profile before deciding whether to follow you.
- **The key to a great ad is a great call to action.** Make sure users know exactly what you want them to do. Try something short and snappy, like “follow us,” “read more,” “register now,” or “download our free report.”
- **Include cards!** Cards are powerful tools that add extra functionality like website previews, app installs, and even conversations to your promoted tweets, making the tweets more engaging and interactive for users.

- **Test everything!** Twitter ads are a great way to learn what resonates with your audience—from ad format to length of copy and tone of voice. Test different formats to find out what works for you.
- **Choose a custom fit over one-size-fits all.** Campaigns with different goals need different creative. Even campaigns with the same goals should differ based on the specific offer or idea you're promoting at the time. Ultimately, the aim is to use Twitter's targeting options to ensure that your ad will only be seen by people who will find it relevant.
- **Use high-quality images and videos.** Your words are important, but visuals are what will grab the user's attention and allow your tweet to stand out. If you're using video ads, make sure they're sharp and compelling—use your video to tell a story that creates interest in your brand.

## How to Build a Following and Amplify Your Impact

Writing your tweet is only the beginning. The next challenge is to promote your profile in order to get maximum exposure and attract attention. Rather than relying solely on search engines, there are several other key techniques you can employ to help get your content noticed.

### *Get Talking...*

Central to building your followers is interaction and creating conversation. When your visibility increases, so do your followers. Asking questions is one of the best ways to get conversational on Twitter, but just as important is to participate in other people's conversations and provide information to them that they will find engaging, relevant and useful. The key to maximising your impact and gaining followers is to share ideas with and reply to those who have shared interests with you, therefore write your tweets with your target audience in mind rather than trying to appeal to a generic wider audience. Include content that contains specialised information and ideas that those interested in your services or sector would read. Be conversational about topics that will be of interest and provide value to others and this will encourage your followers to reach out to their own networks and help spread your message and build your brand following.

### *... And Stay Talking*

Building an active following takes time and requires a daily commitment to sharing content. There are more than 9,500 tweets posted every second, according to Internet Live Stats. Posting valuable content is the only chance to break through the noise. It is therefore vital that in the very beginning you figure out a comfortable tweeting routine that works with your editorial calendar, be it tweeting 5 or 20 times daily, and stick to it in order to maintain consistency and maximise your impact.

### ***Use Your Followers to get More Followers***

Create tweets that encourage your followers to retweet. A common method is to announce that you'll offer a discount or some other benefit to everyone who retweets your offer, but only if you get a certain total number of retweets. Offer your customers a reward if they mention your business — a discount, free trial, or extra service, whatever is relevant for your business. It's also a good idea to include a link to the terms and conditions of your offer in the Tweet.

### ***Promote Your Twitter @username***

Anywhere your customers interact with your brand is an opportunity to encourage them to follow you on Twitter. Once you begin tweeting, remember to promote it across all your other social media platforms and that includes mentioning it on your e-newsletter, your email signature, business card, product packaging and anywhere else your customers will see it. This also applies if you're an active participant in a forum or membership site, placing a signature with your Twitter link will direct more attention to your page.

### ***Use Twitter Directories***

Directories categorise Twitter users into areas of interest and expertise allowing you to easily find, follow and interact with industry influencers and other similar business owners and businesses relevant to you. Not only does this allow you to connect with quality people on Twitter it opens you up to the potentially valuable information that they share and also opens you up to their audiences if they interact with you and share your tweets.

### ***Utilise Relevant Hashtags and Trends***

Ensure that you actively pay attention to relevant trends and hashtags and act when you can see an opportunity that you can utilise. Things that are popular at a certain time create a great opportunity for you to attract new followers so whether it's a person or event that is trending and relates to your business ensure you jump on board and share a piece of content that fits in as you will stand a good chance of gaining some of the traffic and attention that comes with a trending topic thereby opening you up to a new audience and potential new followers.

### ***Go to Tweetups***

Tweetups are a great way to connect in person with those that you follow and interact with on Twitter. Whether you attend an already established Tweetup or you create your own remember to extend the Tweetup invite to the networks of your followers as this has potential for greater reach and audience which is a great way to network with others leading to new relationships and potential future business opportunities.

### ***Go live with Live Video Tweets!***

Research has suggested that 80% of the people who view a video on Twitter tend to remember it. Posting live video broadcasts can be the best way to make a real-time appearance on social media and to promote your brand!

### ***Optimise and Refine Your Twitter Bio***

Your Twitter bio constitutes one of the most important aspects of your profile as your bio is crucial in persuading or dissuading another user from following you. Users will often make a snap decision based on what you have written so it is crucial to present yourself in a professional, targeted and interesting way. Your bio should clearly tell people what you do, what updates they should expect from following you, and why they should follow you. In order to attract and encourage your target audience and the people in your niche to find and follow you, you need to include the right keywords and details

### ***Stay Human!***

The key to success on social media is to remember that you are dealing with people, and people respond to people! To encourage engagement, deepen relationships and attract attention it is vital to present yourself as a 'real' person through a relaxed, approachable and 'human' tone. One of the worst things a business can do on Twitter, and any other social media, is to be 'automated' and 'salesy' and provide boring updates rather than actively engaging their audience with informative, engaging and entertaining content. Make yourself attractive to social media users by letting them know there exists a 'real' person behind the brand by sharing your brand story, making them laugh and encouraging engagement through create content.

### ***Be Active and Post Consistently***

When someone checks your Twitter profile, they can see how active you are and when you last posted. There is nothing worse than for them to see an irregular posting schedule or no postings at all, as they will immediately make the decision that you are not worth following. Being regular with your Twitter activity shows others that you are interested in interacting and engaging with a community which encourages others to follow you and join in. People are on social media to be informed, engaged and interact with friends, family and their favourite brands etc. so show them you are interested in what they have to say by joining in with, encouraging and utilising the conversations others are having online.

### ***Include User Handles for RTs***

Give your tweet the best chance of getting retweeted by including the handle of the contributor(s) of the original content that you are sharing or some other relevant user that you want to target.



### ***Tag Users in Photos for More Retweets***

With Twitter's limiting character constraints, it's not always easy to include all the user handles you would like to in your tweets. A great tip is to upload a photo to Twitter, as you can tag up to 10 people in that photo. All the people tagged will be notified and so it helps get more potential users to retweet your content. You can frequently use this tactic to include tagging post authors, brands mentioned, or simply the people in the photo.

### ***Link to Problem-Solving Content***

One way to grab your followers' attention is to provide content that is valuable to your target audience and will help improve their lives in some way. To identify what content might be valuable to your audience, read through your followers' profiles to discover their likes, dislikes and current influences. Select a common issue that they're dealing with then create content that presents a solution to their problem and promote it on Twitter. It is important that you do this in a genuine and non-self-serving way as your audience will quickly see through your deception. Genuinely look to provide value to their lives and you will find doing so is a great way to integrate your brand into their lifestyles and help you build more genuine customer relationships.

### ***Run a Contest***

People love giveaways, so running a Twitter contest for a chance to win free stuff is a good way to encourage engagement. You will also benefit from all of the social mentions as they will boost brand awareness. Choose a giveaway that is relevant to your audience with a contest theme that resonates with your followers. When deciding how people will enter the contest it's important to keep a low barrier to entry to make it easy for people to participate. Make sure you promote the contest on multiple social media channels.

### ***Offer Personalised Encouragement***

Customers are thrilled when you show them respect and appreciation by devoting the time to interact with them. Give your fans words of encouragement. Identify tweets that announce major milestones (such as a new home, baby, running a marathon or getting married) then craft a short message of encouragement. You can make the message more personal if you do not use any hashtags.

### ***Share Your Followers Tweets***

Retweet your followers to show you recognize the value of their content and that what they are saying or posting online matters. When retweeting your followers, be sure to choose relevant tweets that align with your brand values, add a comment to the retweet to contribute something to the conversation and that the user's profile is a real person. How often you retweet is up to you; some experts recommend

20% of your tweets should be retweets whilst others recommend a 50/50 split. Find out what works best for your industry and your audience and go from there.

### ***Use IFTTT to Curate Twitter Lists Automatically***

When you add people to a Twitter list, it shows to them that their tweets are valuable enough to you to be put in a specific category and as such, the people on your lists are likely to reciprocate the favour by following your account. While adding users to a Twitter list manually takes time, a great tool for making it easier to automate the process is IFTTT. To create an account with IFTTT head to their website and create an account or login, then connect your Twitter account. Next, create a 'recipe' that tells your Twitter account that when a new tweet is posted with a hashtag you determine, it should add that user to a one of your lists. Now, whenever people tweet with the hashtag in your recipe, they will be automatically added to your list. Some people will follow you immediately after this, so be sure to send out a tweet to thank them. Connect with the others on your list with a tweet, saying that you added them to your list because you find their content valuable.

### ***Respond to Tweets From Big Brands***

It is good practice to get into the habit of replying to relevant tweets posted by influential accounts with hundreds of thousands or millions of followers. When you tweet actively and consistently, your tweets and account are more likely to get noticed and followed. Responding to a giant in your industry is a prime opportunity to engage with a bigger audience. Once you respond, your tweet is attached to their tweet and everyone else can see it. Just remember to do it in a genuine way when you can truly add value to the conversation.

### ***Thank People Who Engage With You***

Thank and engage with people every single time they engage with you, whether they ask a question, offer a suggestion, mention you at an event, favourite one of your tweets etc. Not only will this help you keep followers, it also prompts them to share your content even more with their network, helping to increase your visibility. People really appreciate brands who listen to what they have to say and respond to them. Getting in this habit is a great way to organically build an engaged Twitter community.

### ***Tweet Those You Quote***

When you write a blog post that includes a Twitter user remember to @mention those you include. People love to see their names published so tweet directly to them and tell them about it and they'll want to read what you said. From this, they will be likely to reply, retweet and follow you back. If they are particularly influential and have hundreds of thousands of Twitter followers, they may retweet and respond which increases your visibility greatly to their audience and could add numbers to your following.

### ***Embed Tweets Into Blog Posts***

A great method to increase the visibility of your tweets is to embed them into your blog posts. Write a blog post then embed some of your own tweets, as well as tweets from other experts, to help beef up the content. To embed a tweet into your blog, simply click the three little dots below the tweet on your Twitter desktop version. Then hit Embed Tweet to get the code. This is also a great tactic to entice readers to follow you as this shows your readers some of your tweets and gives them great examples of what they will get if they follow you.

### ***Install Twitter Buttons, Widgets and Apps***

Visitors to your website will often look for different ways to follow you on social networks, so make sure your website is primed and ready with follow buttons and widgets in prominent places. If you sell products, give away free downloads or have an email subscribe option on your website and include follow buttons on your thank-you pages. Be sure to also add a Twitter widget to your website and a Twitter app on your Facebook fan page to show your fans your tweets. This is a sleek cross-promotion method that gives fans a taste of your tweets and encourages them to follow you.

### ***Participate in Twitter Chats***

A Twitter chat is a live event that focuses on one subject and is moderated by an individual or brand. People in the chat use a single hashtag and respond to the questions or comments coming from the moderator and/or interviewee. Getting involved in Twitter chats is great for increasing your visibility and gives you the opportunity to share your expertise with new people. Interact with other chat attendees and gain more organic followers along the way.

### ***Share Other People's Content***

To develop valuable relationships and start the cycle of reciprocity on Twitter, actively share content from others. Find blogs, news articles and opinion pieces that involve your niche and broadcast their posts to your Twitter followers taking care to include the author's Twitter handle, as well as the blog's Twitter account. The author will get a notification you shared the post and is liable to reply, retweet and maybe even follow you.

### ***Have Fun!***

Whilst most of your content needs to be in alignment with our brand, every once in a while, it pays to give yourself and your fans a break. Brighten up your followers' feeds with a Twitter "coffee break," so instead of the usual articles, links or niche-based content you post share some fun material, whether it's interesting facts or statistics, cute videos, adorable pictures, tips or jokes. Fun tweets like this can get you a lot of engagement and sharing. However, do take care to not post anything offensive or completely irrelevant to your business.

### ***Create a Twitter Schedule***

Tweeting regularly and consistently will boost your visibility and grow engagement. Save yourself a headache by making Tweeting a fun stress-free habit as you have already created an editorial schedule outlining when and how often you plan to post, the format, and any content themes you plan to target. This will also help you understand the best times to post and the content that resonates most with your audience.

### ***Limit Who Can Reply***

To give Twitter users greater control over unsolicited responses, you can now choose who has the ability to reply to their updates. The platform now offers users three different privacy settings for replies, which include 'Everyone' (default setting), 'Only people you follow', or 'Only people you mention'. It's important to note that the latter two settings will restrict those who can reply, but they will still be able to view, retweet, retweet with comment, and like your tweets.

### ***Schedule Tweets on Desktop***

Perhaps the most convenient feature of Twitter is the ability to saving and schedule tweets. For a long while this could only be done via a mobile device, but thankfully the Twitter desktop app now allows users to draft unfinished tweets and schedule others. The only catch is mobile and desktop are synchronised in this feature yet - so drafts created on mobile will not be available on the desktop app and vice versa.

### ***Use Your Voice With Audio Clips***

Twitter has launched audio clips in Tweets that allow users to share a 140-second voice recording on the platform. This feature makes it easier to Tweet on the go with your voice. Voice Tweets will be published as Tweets with audio attachments that people can play. Here's how to record a voice Tweet;

- Tap the Tweet compose icon then Tap the voice icon
- Tap the red record button to begin recording your message, then tap Done when you are finished.
- You have the option to add Tweet text and/or start a thread with multiple Tweets. You can record up to 2 minutes and 20 seconds for each individual voice Tweet. If your message is longer than that, it will be automatically threaded up to 25 Tweets.
- When you're ready, tap Tweet to send.

### ***Focus on Your Personas***

When it comes to content, a one-size-fits-all approach is never successful. That will be especially true on Twitter in 2021. Instead, Tweets that are targeted toward a specific audience are much more likely to fuel engagement. Now is a great time to take another look at your buyer personas and ensure they still reflect your actual customers. Make sure every Tweet is focused on these personas. Not only will your

content be more relevant and valuable, but it will also make it much easier for you to discover relevant and engaging topics to Tweet about.

### ***Experiment With Different Ad Types***

If you've been advertising on Twitter for a while, you might be in a comfortable rut still adopting the same approach you started with. But Twitter is constantly evolving and bringing out exciting new features. Always strive to improve your marketing by keeping an eye out for new announcements from twitter and take advantage of the many different ways to spread your message. Do not just stick with the basic ads, try experimenting with Carousel ads, Takeover ads, and video advertising.

## **Tips for Success**

### ***Use Hashtags Sparingly***

Do not overload your tweets with hashtags to try and gain visibility. While hashtags can be helpful and open your content to relevant audiences, Twitter itself says that including more than two hashtags in a tweet is likely overkill. This is supported by a Salesforce study that found tweets with 1-2 hashtags receive 21% higher engagement than those with 3+ hashtags. Stick to a couple of relevant Hashtags per tweet to keep it focused.

### ***Upload Photos in the Correct Size***

You need to ensure the images you upload are optimized for the correct dimensions. Most people assume that a perfectly square image is the best dimension for Twitter, but the most engaged with Twitter photos are the horizontal ones that render nicely in a user's horizontally structured stream. The ideal dimension therefore is 440 x 220px.

### ***Answer Customer Calls for Help***

Twitter is a great place for you to strengthen customer relationships by showcasing your customer service skills and helping to solve your customers' problems. You can give your Twitter followers one-on-one assistance through direct messages and/or engage with the customer's tweet and then move the conversation to direct message. It is important that you strive to respond to customer concerns in a timely manner and state your customer service hours of operation in your profile. If you do not, people will assume a service representative is on duty 24/7.

### ***Utilise Keywords in Your Tweets***

Choose several keywords that accurately and best describe your business and industry and strategically use them within your tweets. Doing so gives each of your tweets a purpose as you will show up in search results relating to your keywords and get found by a new, relevant audience.

### ***Connect and Interact With Relevant People***

One of the most important parts of a successful Twitter strategy is following and interacting with quality, relevant people not just anyone who you think will follow you back. You need to be selective and targeted with those you choose to follow as you need them to be the right people who will be interested in your content and from whom you can build a relationship with. Importantly, you need to actively and regularly seek out relevant people through directory searches, influencer twitter lists and through looking at who others are following and then listening to, starting and joining in with conversations with them. Remember to also show your excellent customer service skills by regularly searching for anyone who talks about your brand and interacts with you and interact with them back. Also actively listen to conversations surrounding your industry and by adding your thoughts to the conversation you can establish yourself as an authority within your sector. Doing this will get you more noticed by others and increase your brand exposure resulting in a successful Twitter presence.

### ***Be Social***

If someone has taken the time to connect with you, start a conversation or retweet you then remember to reciprocate and interact with them back. Twitter is a powerful tool for helping spread the word about your business, so it pays to deliver a good, personal customer service for all those who are looking to interact with you. A simple retweet can go a long way towards helping another business in your community so when relevant look for great content from others to share with your audience and you will be rewarded with greater exposure and develop a genuine rapport within your Twitter community. Remember the purpose of using social media is to be social so look to get to know others on Twitter by actively looking for great content that you can share and comment on, conversations that you can join and by encouraging engagement and fostering good relationships.

### ***Stay Relevant and on Topic***

One of the important aspects of having a clear strategy is that it keeps you focused on what content you share with your audience and what kind of content is acceptable to retweet etc. Without a strategy it is easy to share and retweet a broad range of content that may not always be relevant for your business, so to ensure you are developing a quality audience that is relevant to you, and in order to help develop yourself as an authority within your sector it is vital that you stay relevant with what you post and ensure the content is tailored to meet the needs of your target audience.

### ***Don't Be Tempted to Automate Everything***

There are many tools available to help you automate your posts on Twitter which is an attractive option for a terribly busy business owner. Do not be tempted to automate everything as this defeats the purpose of using a social network as you deliberately miss out on the vital social aspect. You need to be authentic and post in real time as this is the only way engage in real conversation within your community and show them that you are genuinely there to give value to them and interact with them. In addition, if you automate everything you potentially open yourself up to an embarrassing event of one of your scheduled tweets being no longer relevant or cause offensive/ thoughtlessness etc. if events happen outside of the online world that may affect your tweet.

### ***Keep Your Profile Updated and Optimised***

Your Twitter profile represents your business in the online world and as such you need to ensure it represents you accurately. This means you need to regularly check your profile to ensure all information is updated and optimised, from an informative bio to a good headshot of yourself and a Twitter Header Image that is consistent with your branding and contains your contact details. Part of this process of staying relevant is to look to tailor your background image and/or profile picture to coincide with national holidays and other special events that are relevant to you.

### ***Stay Updated on News and Changes of Twitter***

As Twitter evolves it is likely to make important changes that you as a business need to be aware of. Remember to follow the official Twitter business page and subscribe to their blog to make sure you are aware and up to date with Twitter's business updates.

### ***Be Visual***

Tweets that contain visuals such as photos, infographics and videos get the highest amount of engagement on Twitter, so you need to incorporate visual elements actively and consistently into your tweets. Photos and videos are more visible and take up more space on a user's feed than a simple text-based post so look to include high-quality, eye catching, and relevant visuals and you will encourage your audience to interact with and retweet your content.

### ***Include Strong Calls to Action***

By ensuring you include a clear call to action in your tweets, you are making sure that each tweet is purposeful for your business. A call to action could be asking for a retweet, directing the reader to an external site, or simply asking a user to interact with you, whatever your call to action is you need to ensure you consistently form tweets that encourage the reader to continue the interaction with you.

### ***Create and Share Curated Lists***

Twitter lists are a great tool to utilise for filtering information. With Twitter lists, you can categorise Twitter users into areas of interest, characteristics and expertise allowing you to easily find, follow and interact with industry influencers and other similar business owners and businesses relevant to you. As you follow more people, your feed gets noisy and crowded with tweets which may result in you missing important messages. To make sure you never miss an important message utilise Twitter lists and categorise the most important people you follow so you can easily see their messages and they do not get lost in the noise of everyone else. Not only does this allow you to connect with quality people on Twitter, but it also opens you up to the potentially valuable information that they share and opens you up to their audiences if they interact with you and share your tweets. Another great feature of a Twitter list is that you can set them to be private or public. This allows you to be able to do a range of important tasks from 'secretly' monitoring your competitors with a private list or show off and share your impressive roster of brand advocates in a public list. By creating and sharing lists you position yourself as an authority in your field and can grow your Twitter community as people begin to trust you to curate the information they are seeking.

### ***Reply to the Right Audience***

Many users assume that every tweet they send appears in every one of their followers' feeds; however, this is not actually the case. If you begin a tweet with a @username only that user and any followers you both have in common will see the tweet in their feed, which limits a tweet's visibility greatly. Whilst limiting the visibility of a tweet can work in your favour, for example if you are responding to a user about a particular bad customer service complaint, by starting your replies with the @username you decrease the number of people who will see the potentially negative conversation. On the other hand, in most cases you want your tweets, especially your positive ones about recommendations, new product launches, customer testimonials etc., to have as much visibility as possible. In this instance you do not want to start a tweet with @username, instead you can use the common method of starting your tweet with a period then the username: .@username or the other method you can apply is to move the username further into your text, for example, "Thank you very much @username! We're glad you love our product."

### ***Don't Just Tweet Article Headlines***

Simply retweeting an article or sharing an article without modifying the headline is a common mistake seen on Twitter. It not only makes the user seem lazy and boring, but it also shows a missed opportunity for you to engage others. So instead of simply tweeting or retweeting the article using the headline already generated automatically for it, put in more effort into it by adding your thoughts and opinions based on the article, taking a retweetable quote from the article, pose questions about the article (e.g. "Have you tried this new tactic?") Or ask your followers for their opinion (e.g. "Has this marketing tactic worked best for you too?") to get people curious about it. This also has the added benefit of not only encouraging engagement but shows yourself as an authority in your sector as you are sharing with your community valuable and trusted information and adding your valuable thoughts and creating debates. The added benefit of sharing content in this way, especially if it is your own article you are sharing, is it



also allows you to use all three methods to tweet about the same article multiple times. This is a great way to promote an article several times, each in a different way, without spamming your followers' feeds.

### ***Show Your Personality and Remember to Be Yourself!***

The most successful businesses on Twitter are those that show the real people behind the brand. Twitter and social media in general offer an informal and chatty platform for your opinions, stories, humour and advice that gives your business a human face and it is through this great ability to humanise your business through the content you tweet that ultimately makes your business appear more engaging, relatable and trustworthy to others. Ensure you utilise this opportunity for your customers to get to know the real you better, so whether you are sharing industry expertise, reviewing a product or sharing an aspect of your brand story, each post gives your customers helping them to better understand who you are, what you do, and ultimately tells them why they should care about you.

### ***Don't Give Up***

After months of marketing efforts, you may still see a low follower count on your Twitter profile which can be disheartening. But do not give up because real success takes time and patience. The key is to stay consistent with your tweeting, add your own unique voice and views, engage with people who resonate with you and continually read up on it, so you become better. Like any marketing tactic, it takes commitment, time and patience to become proficient at it.

### ***Test Paid Marketing***

Twitter, like many other social media networks, is free for users but offers a good selection of advertising options. Similarly to Facebook, followers you have may not see all of your organic posts and even the best campaigns with great potential are derailed if no one sees them, so it's best to reserve some funding for sponsored Twitter content to help boost your profile and keep your brand moving forward.

### ***Get Happy***

The science behind going viral and sharing contagious content lies in emotional content that pulls at the heart strings. Strive to consistently creating uplifting, positive content and you will be more likely to hit the viral sweet spot. Babies, kids, cute animals and everyday hero stories are always great for pulling at the heartstrings to connect on an emotional level.

### ***Strike a Balance***

On the one hand you need to engage your audience and interact with your followers, but on the other you do not want to become a nuisance account with it, or you will quickly lose followers. Do not retweet every mention you get, or tweet too often. You want your followers to view your updates as valuable and

worthwhile, not be turned off by a constant barrage that dominates their Twitter feed. If you learn from best practices and by looking at your analytics and what your audience tells you, Twitter can be one of the most powerful tools in your marketing arsenal.

### ***Be Real***

Nothing is more attractive on a digital platform than a personality and the great thing about Twitter is that it allows you to be real in real-time, but in bite-sized chunks. Do not be afraid to be you on social media so if you have an original thought about a current event, a movie, a trending topic, an element of your industry, a brand, or a product then share it. You might be surprised at how many other people agree with what you are saying and want to engage with it. You will however make missteps, everyone does. After some time and with regular practise, you will become more comfortable expressing yourself in 280 characters or less.

### ***Link your Tweets Together***

From time to time, you might have thoughts that take up more than 280 characters and the good news is you can beat Twitter at its limited character game by linking your tweets together. Linked tweets appear nicely connected in your followers' feeds and so this feature makes it easy for your followers to read a series of your tweets about the same subject, instead of having to fumble through their feed looking for your related tweets. Linking a tweet is simple, if you reply to your tweet and then delete your handle that automatically pops up at the beginning of the reply tweet, these linked tweets will appear seamlessly.

### ***Pin a Tweet***

A pinned tweet is a great introduction to your Twitter presence and a great chance to make a good first impression. Choose a tweet that performed particularly well, one that really expresses who you are, or announces something you want people to know about. The pinned tweet effectively announces your presence so make it a good one.

## **Common Mistakes to Avoid**

### ***Only Tweeting About Yourself***

The essence of social media marketing is about creating social engagement. Therefore, you need to encourage interaction from your followers by sharing valuable and informative information and

comments and listening to and joining in with conversations. Whilst you have a presence as you will ultimately want to drive sales, your tweets should not blatantly reflect this, you need to instead focus on making people love your brand by sharing stories, responding to interactions and sharing and retweeting information they are going to find useful and interesting. A successful Twitter presence is one which is achieved through social interaction and not through pushy sales promotion tweets.

### ***Begging for Followers***

The more people that follow you results in the more reach you have for your tweets. This leads many businesses to beg for followers rather than earning them through posting engaging content, interacting with others and giving incentives to encourage people to follow. Begging for followers affects your businesses reputation online as it makes you appear untrustworthy and desperate.

### ***Randomly Retweeting***

Retweeting is a great practice for businesses to get into however many businesses make the mistake of using retweets as a way of replacing their own content and randomly retweet any content with no real thought to whether the content is relevant to them or their own audiences. Do not make this mistake by ensuring the content you are retweeting is relevant to your audience and in line with your own overall branding and marketing strategies.

### ***Using Too Many Hashtags***

Hashtags are a great way to gather traffic and attention by utilising relevant trends and highlighting keywords, but only if they are used correctly and effectively. The maximum number of hashtags to use per tweet is 3 as anymore can make it unclear to the reader what the main focus of your tweet is on, as well as making your tweet look unprofessional and demonstrates someone that doesn't really know how to use Twitter effectively. By making sure you have a clear goal and message for each tweet you will ensure you know where to clearly put your hashtag to maximise effectiveness.

### ***Rapid Tweeting***

It is clear when a business has no posting strategy as a look to their feed shows days go by without a tweet then there will be a sudden, rapid surge of tweets on a particular day. Do not let your business fall into this approach as not only will you lose and fail to attract new followers you also make it clear to people that you do not understand how to use Twitter making you appear unprofessional. There is no rule as to how often you should be tweeting as this is different for everyone so to ensure you are providing a consistent and effective tweeting schedule for your followers you should actively check your engagement rates to gauge the responses from your audience as this will show you what type of and how many tweets are the most effective.

### ***Choosing a Long and/or Irrelevant Twitter Handle***

Your Twitter handle needs to be clear and representative of your business. If your handle is too long, then you're losing valuable space and if it is irrelevant then you come across as unprofessional and the lack of a handle that is clear to the brand may mean potential followers may miss out on finding you as it is not clear with your Twitter handle who you actually are.

### ***Using Automatic Direct Messages***

Sending an automatic direct message to followers is a common occurrence and one that reflects badly on your business. Don't make your first impression a negative one for the reader by sending an automatic and impersonal direct message. This makes you appear like a robot and often leads to unfollows and an overall general bad impression for your business.

### ***Not Checking Your Tweets for Spelling and Grammatical Errors***

You must remember that you represent your business with every tweet therefore it is vital that you review each tweet carefully before you post. A tweet that is grammatically incorrect, incoherent or riddled with spelling mistakes will affect your reputation negatively so ensure you double check your grammar, spelling and ensure your tweet is clear and concise before you post it.

### ***Only Tweeting 9-5***

Just because your working hours are only 9 – 5 does not mean that your audience is only going to be online and interacting at that time. Therefore, you need to take the time to monitor your account at several points throughout the day, respond to any interactions from others and find out when your audience is most active on Twitter.

### ***Connecting Your Facebook and Twitter Account***

Connecting your Facebook and Twitter feeds, whilst appealing to a time-strapped business owner, is not recommended as each platform requires a tailored use of content and has a best time to post, therefore you need to treat your Facebook and Twitter accounts as separate entities and share your content individually by tailoring them to each one as opposed to having Twitter automatically tweet the same message you posted on Facebook.

### ***Don't be an Egg!***

In the age of authenticity, where you need your brand to show a human side, you have got to treat your Twitter account as a customized digital representation of your personality. This means not leaving your profile picture as the default egg. Make sure you upload and choose a high-quality picture that is professional, relevant and representative of you and your brand.

### ***Don't be Self-Serving***

Do not be network-y in the sense that you openly act/express that the only reason you're on Twitter is for sales purposes. Many businesses on Twitter employ a tactic of pushing continual sales messages that offer little or no engagement and interaction. This is a very damaging approach. Instead, you need to prove yourself to be part of the community, and the networking and leads will come in time naturally. If you engage, interact and provide value in the form of good content and a consistent presence, people will eventually find and follow you and importantly people won't follow you back just because you've asked them to. Twitter is a powerful and successful tool for those who approach it from a connecting and communing building point of view through active participation, not idle expectations and self-serving content.

## **31 Days of Twitter Content to Get You Started!**

1. **Ask Questions** of your audience is a great way to garner engagement
2. **Industry News** Whether it's a simple article about a relevant celebrity/influencer in your industry or a major change in regulations, you want to share this with your audience.
3. **Brand Announcements** Do you have exciting news to announce such as an upcoming launch, new features/service, a big testimonial, or endorsements to share? For extra effect pin this Tweet to the top of your profile for new visitors to see as well.
4. **GIFs and Memes** Share your human side and use storytelling through GIFs and memes into your tweets and replies.
5. **Promo Codes or Sales** Share your promo codes or sales especially if they're exclusively available just to your Twitter followers.
6. **Blog Content** Promote your quality blog content with your followers to get as many people to read it as possible.
7. **Visual Content** Whether it's original photos, branded graphics or infographics, sharing visual content to catch peoples' attention while they're scrolling.
8. **Tease Launches** If you have an upcoming product launch or new service coming out, use your tweets to tease them and let your audience know what's coming.
9. **Events** If there's a conference or networking event that your business is participating in or attending, let your followers know! For extra effect you can live tweet while you are there to engage with industry leaders, specialists and attendees and to generate a conversation around session.
10. **Jump Onto Relevant Social Media Holidays** or even real holidays that your audience celebrates to engage your audience.
11. **Promote Job Openings** If you are hiring let your Twitter followers know so you can find new prospects.
12. **Motivational Quotes**  
Sharing a motivational #QuoteOfTheDay or #MotivationalMonday is a great way to share inspiration with your audience.
13. **Trending Topics**

Twitter promotes trending topics that are being highly discussed on their platform in a given region, and it's worthwhile to jump on these to increase your reach. The golden rule is to always make sure you know exactly what the trending topic is about and that it's relevant to your brand.

14. **Products and Services** Of course you should promote your products/services on Twitter just remember that your content shouldn't be solely focused on promotion. You also want your Twitter posts to engage and inform your audience.
15. **Tips** Your online presence is all about informing and educating your audience, whether it's about your industry or about your products. Share tips on how to use your product, step-by-step for signing up for services and more.
16. **Testimonials** Share proof that people love your products or business by sharing your positive testimonials or reviews.
17. **Polls** Twitter has built-in polling capabilities, which means asking for feedback from your audience has never been easier. You can ask anything from help naming a new product, to fun silly questions and see how the answers turn out.
18. **Share "Behind-the-Scenes" Content** Give your followers a quick glimpse of how your products are made or what happens in your typical work day.
19. **Spotlight an Employee** Show your own staff — and your customers — that you value your employees. People love seeing who's behind the brand.
20. **Showcase a Customer** Give a shout-out to your top customers or share a success story from your audience.
21. **Market Your Product/Service** Tweet a photo of your product, announce new product lines or features, or talk about the problem your product/service help solve.
22. **Ask For Feedback** Give your followers the opportunity to help shape your brand by asking what they like and dislike about your products and any suggestions they have.
23. **Create a Tutorial** Show your customers how easy-to-use and beneficial your products or services are.
24. **Share Your Achievements** Acknowledge your success (such a work event or follower milestone) and thank your followers for their ongoing loyalty and support.
25. **Start a Contest** Have some fun and boost your followers by creating a friendly Twitter competition or giveaway.
26. **Share Industry News** Find an article about your industry you find interesting. Tag the author and ask your followers to weigh in with their opinion.
27. **Advertise a New Promotion** Create a Twitter-exclusive offer or enter everyone who Retweets your Tweet in a raffle. Then consider creating a Twitter Ad to reach new customers.
28. **Answer FAQs** If you are repeatedly getting asked the same questions by your customers, be proactive and answer them in a quick Tweet.
29. **Spread Positivity** Show some humour and fun by telling a joke, sharing a meme or sharing a fun fact.
30. **Business Updates** If an item is back in stock, your website crashed, or your store hours change — Tweet about it to keep your customers in the know and let them know they can rely on your Twitter for the latest news.
31. **Always Respond to Any Mentions You Get** If your customers have been talking about your brand, make sure to acknowledge what they are saying.

## Measuring Success

Like any other marketing strategy, the success of your Twitter profile must be measured against your business objectives. Analysing your Twitter metrics will show you a wealth of information and insights and help determine whether your profile is having a measurable impact and whether the data is reflective of the overall goals of your business Twitter profile. Twitter's Analytics Dashboard provides a fairly good overview of what's working and what isn't for your business. Displayed monthly from your Twitter analytics dashboard, these account metrics provide a snapshot of standout activity.

Accessing your Twitter Analytics dashboard will show you monthly highlights and help you get to know your Twitter followers. You'll be able to see:

- Your follower growth
  - Your followers' interests
  - Your followers' demographics, such as language, gender, and location
  - How many people have seen your Tweets, visited your profile, mentioned your @username, or followed your account
  - Your top Tweets and follower with the largest network in any given month
- 
- **Top tweet:** The tweet that earned the most impressions for a given month.  
Since this tweet reached your largest audience, it's a good example of what you're doing right. This can be any number of factors from tweeting at the right time of day, hashtag use, to content that resonated, or all the above. You may want to consider promoting this tweet.
  - **Top follower:** The top follower of the month, with the highest number of their own followers. Your top followers hold the greatest potential to broaden the exposure of your tweets through retweets and favourites. They are also good connections to have when it comes to finding influencers.
  - **Top mention:** A tweet with the most impressions in which another Twitter user has tagged your username.  
This Twitter is one to consider reaching out to or at least keeping them in mind for the next time you are running an influencer campaign.

### ***Follower Growth***

Tracking your follower count is important as it shows you whether your Twitter strategies and campaigns are worthwhile, and you are successfully attracting people to your profile and business. If your following remains constant over time, this could indicate that you're not utilising Twitter as well as you could and show areas in need of improvement. Your goal should always be to increase relevant followers so you can grow your reach as greater reach results in more visibility of your tweets that could potentially lead to more leads and customers.

### ***Follower Quality and Engagement***

Engagement is about gauging how much people interact with you and the number and quality of retweets, favourites, @mentions, and lists and link clicks are a good way to measure engagement. Tracking these metrics on a regular basis offer the biggest returns in helping you grow your audience so it is vital that you utilise what each individual metric is showing you as using this information will help guide your strategy and ensure you are targeting your readers needs and encouraging interaction and engagement.

### ***Conversion***

Another piece of important information about your Twitter success that can be taken from your analytics is how much traffic that Twitter brings to the rest of your website. In other words, how many Twitter followers/readers are converted into potential customers? If a significant number of website visitors were referred from Twitter, you know that your tweets are generating interest in your products or services and are possibly helping to drive sales. Tracking this number is the true measure of your Twitter marketing ROI as even if you are generating traffic and leads from Twitter, if they are ultimately not turning into customers you may have to re-evaluate how much time and effort you're putting into Twitter as a social media marketing channel.

### ***Link Shares***

Particularly if you are sharing a lot of links from your website or blog, a metric you should be analysing is how many times your content has been shared on Twitter. An easy way to do this is by using a URL Shortening tool such as bit.ly as this tool not only shortens your link creating more character space for you in your Tweets, it also helps determine what types of content are most popular which will ultimately allow you to see which type of content you should focus on creating in the future.

### ***Lists***

Creating lists enables the user to filter the Twitter 'noise' and focus on what and who is important to them on Twitter. Therefore, if you have been added to a relevant list then it shows you that you have been considered influential and that user wants to ensure that they always see your tweets. This is good indicator to you that the content you are posting resonates well with others which goes a long way to show you as an authority within your sector.



# Twitter Maintenance Checklist

## DAILY

- ✓ Post several original tweets sharing blog posts, tips, news etc.
- ✓ Engage with targeted people, prospects and industry influencers
- ✓ Search for tweets mentioning your business, product or service
- ✓ Search for and monitor hashtags and keywords relevant to you and/or your local area
- ✓ See who competitors, industry influencers etc. are following and if appropriate follow them too
- ✓ Respond to any interaction - new direct messages, favourites and mentions.
- ✓ Check relevant hashtags trending that present opportunities to interact
- ✓ Go through feed and get updated on news and insights and add your thoughts and comments to any relevant discussions and/or share relevant content
- ✓ Running Twitter Ads? Review stats twice daily.
- ✓ Listen for and respond to every lead immediately
- ✓ Look to see if any new connections from other social media platforms have Twitter and follow their account
- ✓ During the week gather information and sources for the following weeks post(s)

## WEEKLY

- ✓ **Check Your Insights** - Your analytics will help you figure out what your audience likes and does not like, so you can plan your future content better. It will also help alert you to any red flags early on. Regularly go through your analytics and look at what kinds of topics resonate best with your audience? What tweets grab attention? Follower Growth?
- ✓ Actively find and follow any relevant other businesses and industry influencers
- ✓ Go through your follow lists and unfollow anyone who is inactive

## MONTHLY

- ✓ **Review Your Bio** - Is your bio up to date? If anything about you, your business, or any other content on your About page has changed since you published it, then you should update it.

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# LINKEDIN (FOR PERSONAL USE)

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LinkedIn launched in 2003 and is currently the third most popular social network in terms of unique monthly visitors -- right behind Facebook and Twitter. LinkedIn is the world's largest professional online network, with over 675 million users spanning more than 200 countries. The network is primarily centred on careers and network building and is highly popular with business-to-business users. It enables users to connect and share content with other professionals, including colleagues as well as potential employers, business partners, and new employees. It is also beneficial for those looking to share and discover industry news and for those looking for jobs.

## What's Good About LinkedIn?

- It is reflective of 'the six degrees of separation' theory as the nature of the site allows you to reach out to new people through your existing connections
- It allows for questions and answer inquiries to be addressed within a professional setting
- It is useful to look up background information on people before a meeting or interview

## What's not so Good About LinkedIn?

- People use the site for purely professional purposes, so marketing messages and sales are not always welcomed
- More used for business purposes and thus does not play as active a role in people's daily lives as with other social networks such as Facebook
- LinkedIn is essentially a closed network meaning that you can only interact with users who have given permission to do so. The result of this means your network will not grow without active networking on your part.

## Who Should be on LinkedIn?

The business nature of LinkedIn means that all professionals should have a presence on LinkedIn including freelancers, bloggers, designers, marketers and any other service providers. There are also opportunities for professional businesses to be on LinkedIn, allowing businesses to develop themselves as authorities in their sector and keep their networks informed with business updates by sharing relevant industry opinions and analysis.

## Need to Know Facts, Stats and Tips about LinkedIn

- LinkedIn now has 675 million users with 260 million of them being active on a monthly basis.
- LinkedIn performs 277% better than Facebook and Twitter when it comes to generating visitor-to-lead conversions.
- It's also the platform most used by salespeople to engage with their clients/prospects. 73% of B2B companies said they use it for this purpose.
- 80% of social media B2B leads come from LinkedIn.
- The three major platforms—Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn contributed to 90% of social traffic to B2B blogs and sites. And the platform was responsible for half of that traffic.
- 91% of executives believe that LinkedIn is the top choice for professionally relevant content.
- 89% of B2B marketers include LinkedIn in their digital marketing mix.
- 56% of professionals access the platform using multiple devices.
- 62% of LinkedIn members engage with content on the platform because they found it educational or informative.
- 61% engage with content because it's relevant to them.
- Percentage of users that use LinkedIn Daily: 40%
- Number of New LinkedIn New Members per Second: 2
- 70% of LinkedIn users are from Outside of US.
- There are 57% of male users and 44% female users on LinkedIn.
- After US, India, Brazil, Great Britain and Canada has the highest number of LinkedIn users.
- 13% of Millennials (15-34 Years old) use LinkedIn.
- 28% of all male internet users use LinkedIn, whereas 27% of All Internet Female users use LinkedIn.

## Why You Need a LinkedIn Profile

### *Knowledge*

Having a readily available network of other business professionals means there is a resourceful knowledge base where you can learn, discuss and stay on top of industry news. This means you can better expand your knowledge of your business sector and learn tips and tricks from other industry professionals, all of which can benefit you and your business greatly.

### *Industry Connections and Networking*

LinkedIn offers a great platform for connecting with other professionals in your industry. Within the Groups area you can have professional discussions centred on a topic or industry that allows you to share ideas with peers, pick up tips to help your business grow and connect with people who share similar passions. By sharing your expertise and content with customers, members and prospects in a more social environment, you can not only stay in touch with your connections, but you can also make it easy for others to share the things you are posting online with their colleagues.

### ***Authority***

Through group discussions and general engagement, there is plenty of opportunity for you to demonstrate your expertise and show yourself as an authority through the content you post. By regularly contributing to LinkedIn with valuable, interesting and relevant industry analysis and comment, it shows that you have a deep interest in your sector and are more informed than the average participant; giving potential clients a compelling reason to choose you over competitors. Moreover, those customers will continue to visit and spread the word to others of your valuable and interesting industry knowledge.

### ***Personal Branding***

Whenever you meet a person at a networking event to promote your business, the next step that person will take is to look you up online. A professional LinkedIn profile provides you with an opportunity to be easily found and to showcase who you are and why you are a valuable connection to have. Think of your profile as a compelling presentation of your professional self that compels the viewer to connect with you.

### ***Extended Sales Arm***

The people in your LinkedIn network could aid your next sale. The potential power of LinkedIn for your business lies in the people in the network you have built and the connections you have made— vendors, colleagues, business partners and the people you meet along the way at events. It is not only about who you know; it's about who they know. LinkedIn provides a great tool in its advanced search capabilities that allow you to know exactly which companies you need to connect with and who in your existing relationships/ connections might provide an introduction to them. That is what makes LinkedIn a very powerful tool to have in your arsenal as it has the ability to tap into that connection and grow your brand through word-of-mouth.

## **How to Create an Effective LinkedIn Personal Profile**

### ***The Profile Summary***

The summary area of your LinkedIn Profile constitutes the most important part of the entire page because it is the first thing readers' scan after reading your name and tagline. For this reason, your summary must be compelling. Here are some suggestions that will improve your summary:

- ✓ Write it in the first person 'I am' etc. as it shows an authenticity that you miss out on when writing in the third person.

- ✓ Write your Summary in the Who / What / Goals format. Clearly stating who you are, what you do with the final section providing information about your professional goals and aspirations.
- ✓ Read your summary and keep asking yourself 'so what?' as this will help you to pinpoint areas for improvement.

### ***Optimise your Profile for SEO Benefit***

Suggestions for optimising your LinkedIn Profile for SEO benefit include:

- ✓ Customise the URL for your public profile
- ✓ Embed keywords strategically throughout your profile
- ✓ Try to list up to the maximum of three links in the billboard area (e.g., your business website, your personal website, your blog). When entering the anchor text for the hyperlink, embed as many of your keywords as possible.

### ***Fill Out Every Section Fully***

- ✓ ***Emphasize Your Professional Skills***  
LinkedIn showcases your top 10 skills based on endorsements, so people know where you excel. Make sure you fully optimize and fill out as many specific keywords you can to help you get quick endorsements from your connections for those skills.
- ✓ ***Promote Your Projects***  
Promote and highlight your products, services and projects in the Projects section. Directly link each project to your website and include team members when applicable.
- ✓ ***Link to Your Publications***  
The Publications section is perfect if you're an author, regular contributor to top publications, have eBooks, white papers and other company content that you want to promote. You can directly link each publication to where visitors can buy your books, link to author profile pages and also to landing pages for your content.
- ✓ ***Share Your Honours and Awards***  
This section is where you can highlight notable lists and mentions you've received from recognized authorities and publications in your industry.
- ✓ ***Showcase Specialized Certifications***  
The Certifications section allows you to showcase your specialised educational achievements within your industry. If your business has received a certification for your industry, promote and showcase it here so people can learn more about it.
- ✓ ***Highlight Industry-Related Coursework***  
If you've taken any courses that are relevant and apply to your business, you can list them in the Courses section. This can include coursework you completed at university, on-the-job training course and those offered by recognised organizations in your industry.
- ✓ ***Feature Your Professional Memberships***  
If you belong to professional organizations in your industry, use the Organizations section to highlight your membership and the position you hold/have held.

✓ ***Demonstrate Language Proficiency***

Demand for people who speak several languages is huge. Therefore, if you are fluent in multiple languages, include that information in the Languages section.

✓ ***Highlight Your LinkedIn Groups***

When you join LinkedIn groups, you have the option of listing them on your profile, as shown in the Groups section below. You should utilise this opportunity as this can benefit you three-fold:

- People who want to get to know you can do so by joining the groups you're in and engaging with you there.
- If you run groups for your business, you can display them on your profile to help increase membership.
- Joining groups related to your industry means you can add more keywords to your profile

✓ ***Publicise Your Interests***

When you follow businesses, news channels, publishers and influencers found on LinkedIn Pulse, they will appear in the Following section of your profile. Use this section to optimise your profile for specific keywords, highlight publications that you may contribute to and showcase your customers.

✓ ***Support Your Causes***

One in five hiring managers has chosen a candidate based on his or her volunteer experience so add the Volunteer section to your profile to show others that you also care about helping others. For non-profits, this is also a great way to promote your organization and cause.

✓ ***Add a LinkedIn Background Photo to Your Profile.***

Give your LinkedIn profile a little bit more personality by adding an on-brand background photo of your own. LinkedIn recommends a background photo size of 1584 x 396 pixels, and that it must be a JPG, PNG, or GIF file under 8MB.

### ***Keep Your Network Posted with Status Updates***

Keeping your network posted with status updates should be a routine procedure. It gives you the opportunity to share valuable information with your network about what you're doing. Done right, status updates can engage your followers, create leads, and facilitate customer conversion. Here are some tips on how to optimise your status updates:

- ✓ Leverage the power of status updates by embedding special keywords when posting
- ✓ Focus on sharing informative and useful updates as that is the information members expect from connections they follow on LinkedIn
- ✓ Post status updates encouraging your followers to interact with you, and this includes using a clear call to action within your post
- ✓ Post regularly and consistently and you will reach more of your audience and extend your reach.

Here are four specific types of content you can share for higher engagement on LinkedIn;

- **Tell a Story** Stories typically capture attention in the feed more effectively than plain facts or tips and therefore will get your LinkedIn posts read and shared more. For inspiration you could share a personal before-and-after story discussing how you used to struggle with something and

how you overcame it. Or share a success story about a student, client, or reader you've helped, following a similar before-and-after format.

- **Facilitate an Unbiased Debate** An effective type of LinkedIn post is asking an unbiased question to gather opinions. Think of something relevant to your niche or industry and ask a simple question such as "Most of my clients tell me X. Do you agree? Why or why not?"
- **Dispel a Myth** A common LinkedIn post is to bust a common myth related to your area of expertise. Think about what insider knowledge or experience you have and then try to come up with a list of common beliefs that are false and show off your expertise by dispelling them.
- **Share Positive Encouragement** Posts with positive sentiment tend to do well on LinkedIn. Share something positive or encouraging and give them a morale boost.

### ***Use Your Profile as a Central Hub***

When searching for someone on Google in most cases their LinkedIn profile is seen on the first page with the vast majority appearing in the first five results. This means that you need keep your profile current and up to date to highlight your experience and expertise and in addition requires that your profile needs to become a central source for connecting all your other social media platforms. LinkedIn has many available tools for you to utilise that can link your profile with your Blog and Twitter feed among others so is a great way to support and drive attention to your other sites.

### ***Add Rich Visual Content to Your LinkedIn Profile***

Throughout your profile LinkedIn provides you with the opportunity to visually enhance your profile so you need to leverage this opportunity. Add some oomph to your profile by adding some up to date, rich, visual content and you will help yourself and your profile to stand out from the rest and get noticed. Embracing the visual in social media marketing is important so utilise this and share with your audience creative, informative and engaging visual elements such as pictures, SlideShare presentations and videos. A key thing is to also remember not to just create and then forget your newly visual profile, rather, actively update and refresh your profile with current, fresh and valuable content such as examples of new work, recent articles and features in the press.

### ***Connect with New Contacts in Groups and Answers***

Joining and contributing to LinkedIn Groups helps to locate people with shared interests and establish valuable new connections. In addition to the benefit of increased traffic to your profile page, participating within a Group has the added benefit of learning from others and participation in a group or within the LinkedIn Answers section allows you to highlight your ideas and insight. The more you participate, the more you'll build credibility and trust within your industry. If you're contributing valuable content, you will soon improve your own reputation as an invaluable resource on select topics by other industry connections.

### ***Give and Get Recommendations***

Recommendations from colleagues, business partners and satisfied clients go a long way in establishing your value and credibility. As either an employee or a business, a recommendation can carry a great deal of weight in the eyes of future customers or employers as they essentially act as solid examples of a good experience with you in a personal manner. If you want to get recommendations, use LinkedIn to give them to people you've worked with and who have done a great job for you and they will likely reciprocate. Similarly, with the new Endorsement feature, if you endorse someone, they'll be notified and you're likely to get a reciprocal endorsement in return.

### ***Add, Remove, and Rearrange Entire Sections of Your Profile***

LinkedIn enables you to reorder entire sections of your profile in any way that you prefer. This is a great feature to help you optimise your profile as you can place your most important sections in prominent places and delete any that are not relevant to you for example. Simply go into edit mode, hover your mouse over the double-sided arrow in each section. Your mouse will turn into a four-arrowed icon, at which point you can click, then drag and drop to another position on your profile.

### ***Edit Your Public Profile Settings***

You want to ensure that people can find your profile when they do a public search. You ideally want to show public viewers as much as possible to convince them to click to view your full profile and make a connection. Locate the Privacy & Settings option on your LinkedIn homepage and click Manage. To access your public profile settings, click your profile image and select the Privacy & Settings option. On the next page, click Edit Your Public Profile to see what items are displayed on your public profile. The right side of the page shows a list of items that are displayed on your private profile and you can choose which items to show on your public profile. You can choose to share only a few sections of your profile with public viewers or be fully transparent and show all sections. Just ensure that you enable the setting that allows anyone to see your public profile. You may feel uneasy about showing your entire profile but it is important to do so as your public profile will never display rich-text media like videos or full-text recommendations, therefore, your description of your job experience is the most important part of your profile.

### ***Consider Upgrading Your LinkedIn Account***

The goal of improving your public image on LinkedIn is to get high-quality connections. With a premium plan, you gain access to additional features such as seeing people who viewed your profile, requesting and making introductions and mailing other users from within LinkedIn. These are features that could greatly benefit your business so consider upgrading your account if you are in a position to do so.



*To ensure you get yourself noticed in the competitive world of business, you need to present yourself online in a way that impresses and builds confidence in your skills, products, and services. Use the checklist below to ensure you create a powerful LinkedIn profile that sells who you are and why you deserve to be noticed.*

## LinkedIn Professional Profile Checklist

✓ **Professionally Taken Photograph**

Your LinkedIn profile is your digital introduction and first impression with your reader. It's important to look your best and a professionally taken photograph will ensure you are portrayed in the best light.

✓ **Professional Name**

You need to present a name that is professional, relevant and representative of what you want to present yourself as to others. Remember to stay away from cheesy and gimmicky names.

✓ **Attention Grabbing Headline**

The headline needs to be powerful and draw a reader in and compels them to read on. Use this area to clearly and professionally show to others how you can help them and encourage them to want to find out more about you. Remember to present yourself in a positive and articulated way staying away from overtly selling yourself.

✓ **Customised Profile URL**

LinkedIn provides you with a default URL which you need to customise. Not only will this aid your SEO efforts, it looks more professional especially as you are likely to include your LinkedIn URL in your email signature or on your business card.

✓ **Compelling, Interesting Summary**

Your LinkedIn Summary needs to stand out as this is your chance to demonstrate to potential business connections and employers that you are an expert and someone who deserves to be noticed. Your professional headline served the role of initially drawing visitors to your profile and so your professional summary must expand upon and support this further by supporting what you say in your headline. You need to craft well written paragraphs that convince the reader that they need to work with you and want to initiate contact. From this, remember to finish this section with a clear call to action as it's important to tell your reader how to reach you once they've finished reading your LinkedIn summary.

✓ ***Complete Experiences that are Keyword-Rich***

A powerful LinkedIn profile includes your past experiences which is an area that is highly sensitive when it comes to SEO. By including keywords that people are using to find someone like you, you are ensuring that your LinkedIn profile performs well in search and that you will be found. You need to ascertain which keywords that you would like to appear under in LinkedIn search results and when you do a search for those keywords look at the profiles of those that appear in the top few results, taking the time to examine how they have placed their keywords and then use that knowledge and apply it to your own profile.

✓ ***Embraces the Visual***

LinkedIn gives you the opportunity to add visual elements to your profile, so you need to leverage this opportunity. Embracing the visual in social media marketing remains highly important so utilise this and share with your audience creative, informative and engaging visual elements such as pictures, memes, presentations and videos.

✓ ***Easily Contactable***

Take a look through your profile and ask yourself 'how contactable am I'? If you are looking to LinkedIn to foster business opportunities, then you need to make sure that it is easy and clear throughout profile how you can be contacted. Remember to include your contact details such as your email address or and/or phone number and links to your website and other social media accounts. It is vital that you don't make it hard for someone to get in contact with you if they want to as if you do, they are likely to move on and contact someone else.

✓ ***Member of Several Relevant LinkedIn Groups***

Being a member of several relevant LinkedIn groups to your industry has several important benefits including being a powerful help towards getting noticed. LinkedIn Groups also present great avenues for potential business opportunities, keeping up to date with industry news and also encourages and fosters relevant debate and conversation with others with similar interests. Therefore, be active within your groups and you will likely be rewarded with increased contacts, knowledge and the potential for business opportunities.

✓ ***Credible Recommendations***

Recommendations go a long way towards establishing your credibility as they act as concrete examples that others have worked with and have been impressed by their experience with you. This will ultimately act a powerful persuader in the eyes of future customers or employers looking to potentially work with you.

✓ ***Completed Profile***

Your LinkedIn profile extends far beyond the summary section. Work Experiences, Volunteer Experiences & Causes, Certifications, Education, Interests, and Groups and Associations are just a few of the additional sections that need to be fully completed in order to have a powerful LinkedIn profile.

## Tips for Success

### ***Easily Find New Connections - or Connect With Old Ones!***

The Connections tab in the top navigation offers a variety of other tools useful to help you grow and connect with contacts in your professional network. By clicking 'Add Connections' in the drop-down menu you can import contacts from your email accounts and get suggestions for other connections. The Find Alumni feature allows you connect with other alumni in addition to the Keep in Touch feature that helps you stay in touch with current connections, keep track of your communications, and get notifications when contacts in your network change jobs or have birthdays for example. LinkedIn has a connected mobile app so you can take advantage of these features and interact easily on the go.

### ***Leverage the Perks of LinkedIn Groups***

There are many 'hidden' perks of LinkedIn Groups that many people do not know about. For example, did you know that if you are a member of the same group as another user, you can bypass the need to be a first-degree connection in order to message them? Provided you've been a member of LinkedIn for at least 30 days and a member of the particular group for at least 4 days, LinkedIn allows you to send up to 15 free 1:1 messages to fellow group members per month (across all groups you belong to). In addition, group members are also able to view the profiles of other members of the same group without being connected. Join more groups to take advantage of this ability to enable more messaging and profile viewership capabilities.

### ***Create a Profile Badge for your Personal Website or Blog***

If you have your own personal website or blog, you can promote your personal LinkedIn presence and help grow your professional network by adding a Profile Badge that links to your public LinkedIn profile.

### ***Take Advantage of Advanced Search Options***

LinkedIn's Advanced Search feature provides a much richer search experience. For example, if you want to find out if you're connected to anyone who works at a specific company, type the company name in the company field in Advanced Search, then filter the results by "Relationship" to see if you have any first- or second-degree connections to any employees.

### ***Leverage @mentions in Your Status Updates***

Make use of the ability to tag or @mention other users and companies in status updates by include the @ symbol immediately followed by the user's/company's name in your status update. This will ensure that user/company will get alerted that you mentioned them, and their name will also link to their profile/page in the status update itself.

### ***Proofread Your Profile***

Your profile represents you in the professional world therefore always remember to check your copy for correct spellings, punctuation and grammar as your LinkedIn profile is an extension of your corporate persona so simple errors could damage your authority, reputation and appeal. This also extends to checking your profile thoroughly to ensure what you are saying is effectively and clearly communicated to the reader and the layout is visual appealing with short sharp paragraphs. It is beneficial to ask someone external to read through your profile to check for mistakes and to see whether they understand clearly all what you are saying within your profile.

### ***Do Not Lie About Anything***

In an age where it is easy to check information on the internet such as your education or job experience it is neither worthwhile nor appropriate to lie within your profile. In doing so you risk a very public 'outing' if you are found out that instantly makes you look unprofessional and untrustworthy which will likely affect your potential for future business.

### ***Utilise LinkedIn Badges on Your Website***

LinkedIn has available several types of profile badges that can help you promote your LinkedIn profile. By using the HTML code, you can attach a badge to your blog, website or any other forums you are active on and when users click on these badges, they'll be automatically directed to your LinkedIn profile, helping you expand your connections.

### ***Personalise Your LinkedIn Connection Requests***

When attempting to make a connection with a fellow professional, always tailor and personalise your request email rather than using the default message. Personalising the message makes it look as if you have made the extra effort to connect and as such you reduce the risk of those people ignoring you who will automatically do so when they see the default message appear. Review LinkedIn's suggested connections at least a few times a week and make it a goal to find people in your industry or niche and personally connect with them, aiming to connect with two or three people each time. When you send a connection request, personalise it in some way for that individual person as doing so will increase the chance that they will approve your request and give you a better shot at landing a new connection.

### ***Add a ProFinder Badge to your profile.***

A ProFinder Badge is used to identify freelancers within LinkedIn's ProFinder. This service matches contractors with project managers who are seeking help. Freelancers can display a ProFinder badge on their profiles to show prospective clients their skills, expertise, and recommendations.

### ***Leverage LinkedIn Applications***

LinkedIn has several applications which you can use to enhance your profile. Examples include the WordPress app which lets you sync blog posts with your LinkedIn profile or the SlideShare application that enables you to embed videos in your profile. The aim on LinkedIn is to create the most eye-catching profile so adding relevant applications that help you show your skills off is going to help you attract attention.

### ***Keep Your LinkedIn Profile Up to Date***

Make sure at least once every 3 months you assess and update your LinkedIn Profile. Check all information is still relevant and correct and remember to always update your profile every time you receive an award, achievement or any other relevant information.

### ***Synchronise Your LinkedIn Profile and CV***

Take the extra time to be sure that extracts from your professional CV match perfectly with the information shown on LinkedIn's Experience section. This is for consistency but also avoids the potential embarrassment of getting tripped up in an interview or when meeting with a potential client when it is discovered that what you claim on your CV does not match up with your LinkedIn Profile.

### ***Keep It Professional at All Times***

LinkedIn is considered the most professional social media platform therefore it is expected that you conduct yourself professionally when you are interacting with others and sharing updates. Before you post a comment or share something remember that you are representing yourself in a business environment so if it isn't relevant or could cause offence, do not risk your reputation and post it.

### ***Turn Off Notifications When Updating Your Profile***

When you are updating your profile with a lot of changes remember to temporarily disable notifications. The reason for this is it can become quite annoying for your connections to receive a stream of updates in a short period of time as you change and update your profile.

### ***Regularly Connect with Your Connections***

Once you have a new connection don't simply forget about them, make an effort to reach out and create and maintain a new relationship. This can be as simple as leaving a positive comment on their update or sending them a link to some information they might find useful. Not only is this polite and shows you are genuinely interested in maintaining your connections, it also makes yourself active in their mind and so they may instantly think of you for new business opportunities that arrive.

### ***Introduce Your Connections to One Another***

If you have a connection that could provide value or be a useful contact for one of your other connections, then introduce them to one another. This is a great way for you to develop relationships and gain referrals for yourself.

### ***Connect Offline***

With so much networking and interacting conducted over the internet, it's easy to get used to only interacting with others online and forget that the people we're connecting with are not just a name and picture on our screen, they actually exist in the 'real' world. Online conversations however are not sufficient enough on their own to truly build relationships, networks and to get results. Rather, you need to make sure you get the most out of your new connections and make a good impression by putting in an effort to meet offline and talk with and meet the people who you've connected with.

### ***Utilise LinkedIn Sponsored Updates***

Using Sponsored updates is a way of putting your content in front of key influencers and audiences on LinkedIn, ultimately helping you to build your credibility as an expert in your industry and helping you gain more exposure to those people who are not in your network. With sponsored updates you have the ability to narrowly limit the audience for your update by targeting your update by location, company category, job title, schools attended, LinkedIn groups and more. The comprehensive analytics that are provided also lets you determine just how effective your paid updates are, allowing to you make the most of your investment. The Metrics you are able to analyse range from Impressions, total spent, Clicks, to CTR (click-through rate) and CPC (cost per click). You also have the very useful ability to compare the effectiveness of your sponsored against non-sponsored updates on your company page's analytics page. Metrics that you can track here range from the level of Interactions, Impressions, Clicks and Engagement. Looking at which can help you determine the rate at which your sponsored updates perform than your non-sponsored updates. The key to remember with sponsored updates however is that you need to sponsor posts that are highly valuable, engaging and informative to your target audience, to ensure you have a positive return on investment and help establish yourself and business as a leading thought expert in your industry.

### ***Offer Value in Discussion Groups***

Being a member of relevant groups on LinkedIn allows you to interact with and participate in relevant discussions with other members who are in your industry or are of interest all within in a professional setting. LinkedIn discussion groups provide a valuable opportunity for marketers to establish themselves as thought leaders, learn more about their community and target audience and not to mention helping to generate leads. Make it a priority to stay active and contribute regularly in order to enrich discussions with valuable, informative and engaging content that engages and targets your audience's needs. In doing so you help establish yourself as a valued and trusted source of information to your industry, help

foster new connections, learn new and relevant news and could ultimately lead to new business opportunities.

### ***Focus on Developing Relationships Rather Than Adding Connections***

You will get a lot more out of LinkedIn if you start to periodically reach out to your connections in your personal network in order to get to know them better and importantly develop relationships. Look to collaborate and share information with them, talk to and learn about them and their skill set/knowledge and ask questions to generally get to know them. The reasoning behind developing relationships is that once you both develop a bond and trust element between each other you become a trusted advisor to one another making it more likely that if an opportunity presents itself where you can help one another, recommend the other's product or service you're the first person they turn to. From your point of view, you have a specialist in an area to answer your questions on a topic, provide potential business opportunities to or to collaborate with on projects and in turn, you become the same for your connections. Ultimately, treating each individual as a human and getting to know them can develop into something greater from simply a new friendship, collaboration to even new business.

### ***Don't Treat LinkedIn as an Online Version of Your CV***

Whilst LinkedIn is a platform for showcasing you and your skillset, you should not treat it like an online version of your CV. Instead of creating your profile in the bog-standard format of talking about yourself in a general sense like 'here is where I went to school' 'this is the business I work for' 'this is what I do for a job' etc. Look to instead craft your entire profile in way that clearly and concisely addresses, targets and fixes your target audience's needs, making them have to take notice of you and is compelling enough to get the point across of why no one else but you can be the saviour to their problems/needs. For example in the job section don't just simply state what you do in a generic sense, mould your answer to your specific target audience and instead write your section in the format of "I help [Insert Target Audience] achieve [Insert Their Desired Outcome] by providing [list product, skills and/or services you offer]."

### ***Post Status Updates Daily***

It's important to be active on LinkedIn, and that starts with posting status updates every day. Think of your LinkedIn updates the same way as any social media post. Make sure they add value, talk about your business and include a call to action. When you consistently stay in the feeds of your connections, there's more opportunity for them to comment, like and share your posts. This interaction gets you introduced to their connections and gives you one more way to grow your network. When people are sharing and commenting on your stuff, it's social proof that you're an expert in your field.

### ***Engage With Your Connections' Updates***

Review your wall regularly and share, comment on and like other people's updates and long-form posts. Start relationships with new connections by commenting on their updates. Build an audience by joining

the conversation on popular posts in your niche. This interaction lets people know you exist and gives you more visibility. Some of these people are likely to want to know more about you, leading to new connections.

### ***Leverage Local Networking Groups***

If you belong to a local networking group, look through your membership directory and send LinkedIn connection requests to individual members. Even if you don't remember meeting someone in person, use your shared real-world connection to personalize your connection request and start to get to know that person online. For example, you could say something like "We're both members of (local group name), and I would love to connect here, too." Then head to your next networking meeting newly armed with great networking info. Search for local group members in LinkedIn groups. You may find them there, too.

### ***Post Content and Develop Authority With LinkedIn's Publishing Platform***

LinkedIn has a publishing platform that is a great, powerful tool to help you publish professional, attractive looking posts (three posts are displayed with images at the top of your profile page) and help you build momentum and establish yourself as a thought leader in your industry or niche. One of the key benefits of the publishing platform is that your posts are seen by the entire LinkedIn community, not just your connections. Getting noticed by this broader audience will help you build your network, increasing your exposure. Those who normally wouldn't see your profile in search results will now have a chance to find out what you do and how you can help them. Keep your content fresh and current by making sure you publish at least a few times a month. Write articles about your own business and industry expertise or career experiences to differentiate yourself and stand out. Share your unique perspective and insights. The frequency of your posts will also make a difference in growing your visibility, reach and engagement. To see the best results, make a commitment to publishing content consistently on LinkedIn's platform.

Here are four reasons to jump on the LinkedIn publishing platform:

- ✓ Position yourself as an industry expert. Sharing how you think and providing insights and guidance through your LinkedIn posts can position you as the go-to expert in your industry.
- ✓ Increase your reach. As you publish more posts on LinkedIn, you will earn more followers (which are different from connections). Your followers can see your published posts and share with their respective networks.
- ✓ Give your SEO a Boost. Your LinkedIn posts will also be indexed by Google search and can be discovered across the social web outside of LinkedIn as well.
- ✓ Generate new leads. In every LinkedIn post you publish, include a simple call to action either within the post or at the end in your bio section.



### ***Learn Valuable Info From LinkedIn Publisher Stats***

The new LinkedIn Publisher stats offer amazing insight into very useful information such as how many people are viewing each post, reader demographics, the top four industries, job titles, locations and traffic sources that showed interest in your posts and the people who engage with your posts. You can also see who engaged with your posts by liking or commenting on them, which includes people you are not directly connected to, so it makes it an excellent opportunity to find potential prospects or partners.

To see your stats, go to the Who's Viewed Your Posts tab, which is located under Profile in the main navigation under Who's Viewed Your Profile. Click on any post to see a graph that shows the number of views by the last 7 days, 15 days, 30 days, 6 months or 1 year. Regularly review these numbers, as well as the elements of the posts themselves, to see patterns that will tell you what topics, format and length your readers are most interested in.

### ***Market Smart***

The key to success on LinkedIn is to consistently market smart. Here is a simple but very effective 3-point plan to boost your build authority and trust and see your leads skyrocket. It's as simple as researching and engaging with new users and groups before reaching out directly with appropriate and targeted content. When you do reach out and post something, you need to ask yourself when crafting your post: "Why am I doing this post, who benefits and what would I like them to do next?"

- Research, find and join relevant groups in your niche.
- Join the conversation. Engage with posts and comment with useful insights and note what's trending/popular.
- Reach out directly and connect with new people via profile email or InMail. Share valuable, engaging and useful articles and insights. Create content that you can also place on your blog, video channel, podcast or in a LinkedIn post. Where possible, drive your visitor back to your preferred online asset. (Website, eBook, landing page etc.)

### ***Include a Call to Action On Every Post***

For better engagement and organic reach on LinkedIn, you should always end your posts with a question or call to action (CTA). By asking people to respond with what they think, this will help you get more responses creating a more dynamic discussion, which in turn will get the LinkedIn algorithm to recommend it in more people's news feeds. Here are some CTA examples you can include;

- "Leave a comment below and let me know what you think."
- "What do you think? Do you agree or not?"
- "Do you agree with this?"

### ***Utilize Live Video***

Live content is becoming ever more popular and LinkedIn has introduced the capacity for individuals and brands to showcase themselves by going live on the platform. According to the platform, LinkedIn Live videos get on average 24x more comments than native videos produced by the same brand, so it is an important feature for you to get on board with. Treat LinkedIn Live like a fresh area for you to share your content ideas. Use it to help launch new products, host professional events, showcase the people behind your brand, answer Q&As or demonstrate your thought leadership. Your LinkedIn followers will be notified every time you go live, which is a great way to increase your exposure on the platform.

### ***Get Reactions to Your Content***

Just like Facebook reactions, users can now respond to a LinkedIn update by pressing and holding the like button and choosing from different expressions such as like, celebrate, support, love, insightful, and curious. This new feature makes engaging with content quicker and easier than ever before. The more interactions your posts gain, the more LinkedIn feeds your post will reach so it is important you take the opportunity to create creative content that makes people react creating genuine interactions for you or your brand.

### ***Use Polls to Get People Involved***

LinkedIn Polls is an effective feature for driving engagements and to get a quick gauge check from your professional network. Use your Poll as a springboard for conversations, ask your network for feedback on things you want informed input on. This can be anything from a light topic such as office etiquette to a more serious topic such as business advice. When you have created the poll, you can keep an eye on the activity in real-time, such as how many votes have been received and the results so far. Only you can also see who has voted and what they voted for.

### ***Use LinkedIn Documents to Create Engaging Scrolling Posts***

Try using LinkedIn's document sharing feature to create LinkedIn carousel posts to instantly boost your engagement. LinkedIn documents can be previewed in a scrollable format, making them the perfect tool for businesses to share dynamic, engaging galleries of images. We all know the importance of including visuals in our social media content, so by using them for your next LinkedIn post it can easily turn your static text into engaging content. For a top tip, add navigation arrows to your images to appeal to peoples curiosity and encourage more tap-throughs, which ultimately means more engagement and reach for your content!

## Common Mistakes to Avoid

### ***Listing Skills that LinkedIn Doesn't Recognise***

When you start typing a skill on your LinkedIn profile, make sure it appears in the dropdown menu. If it doesn't it is not a frequently searched item so, make sure you stick to the thousands of skills LinkedIn already has in the system and your profile will pop up more often in search results.

### ***Not Personalising Your LinkedIn Public Profile URL***

Many people leave the default mess of letters and numbers at the end of the URL. You need to change this to your name or as close as it you can come to it as it will make you appear more professional and enhance your personal brand.

### ***Having No Photo or An Inappropriate Photo***

One of the biggest mistakes on a LinkedIn profile is to not use a photo or using one that is inappropriate. LinkedIn is a professional networking site so your photo should reflect your general industry and your personal professionalism. Ensure your picture is representative of you by being up to date, clear and good quality. Never make the mistake of failing to use a photo at all as this can easily lead to missed connections.

### ***Sending Spammy Messages and Over Posting***

Remember to always share updates in the mind frame of helping and providing value to others. This means avoiding posting spammy and self-serving messages to your connections and especially not posting high quantities of updates a day.

### ***Asking For or Giving People You Don't Know Recommendations***

You should never ask for a recommendation or give one to someone that you don't know and can't personally vouch for. The reason being that if you give someone a recommendation that is actually a poor worker then it reflects badly on you for recommending them to others, similarly if someone gives you a recommendation that has a poor reputation this also will appear negatively on you.

### ***Criticising and Commenting Negatively in Groups***

LinkedIn groups are a great place to make new connections and interact professionally with others, however if you act negatively posting rude, critical or offensive comments you harm your reputation and will miss out on potential business opportunities.

### ***Posting Self-Serving Content in Your Groups***

LinkedIn Groups are to be used to share relevant, informative and interesting updates to other members, not for spamming your self-serving content. If you have a genuine piece of information that you know other members will find useful but is self-promoting in some way, then you need to craft it in a way that ensures that the aim of the content is to provide value first.

### ***Asking New Connections or People You Don't Know to Endorse You***

It is amazingly easy to give and receive endorsements from others on LinkedIn without thought and this is primarily why endorsements do not hold as much respect as recommendations do. So, do not be tempted to go and endorse as many connections as possible in the hope that they return them to you. Rather only endorse those you can personally vouch for and preferably create a personal recommendation.

### ***Treating LinkedIn Like Other Social Media Platforms***

LinkedIn etiquette is quite different from other social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. It is widely accepted that LinkedIn is the most professional platform and as such you need to act as though you are a professional environment. This does not mean that you should not show a personality, you just need to remember who your audience is as they are not likely to receive a meme of a cat for example in the same way as an audience on Facebook will.

### ***Not Including Past Jobs or Volunteer Work***

Your profile needs to be a robust and complete picture of you in a professional setting, so even if you have changed fields you still need to include past examples of your work and the skills you acquired whilst there as it all works together to create an account of you and your skills. Similarly volunteering work can tell a potential employer or business prospect a lot about you as a person, your interests and what extra skills you have acquired outside of work, so it is important that you include it within your profile taking care to elaborating on tasks you completed and skills acquired.

### ***Lurking***

Many people set up a profile and assume that is enough to get you noticed. Rather, to truly get the most out of LinkedIn you need to make a conscious effort to be active in your groups, share content that engages your connections and maintain an up-to-date profile.

### ***Not Utilising LinkedIn Groups***

LinkedIn groups are a great resource for building your knowledge base and connecting with individuals in similar industries. There is much to gain in terms of knowledge development, new connections and

business opportunities by joining and being an active member of LinkedIn Groups, so make the effort to join groups that are relevant to you and your interests so you don't miss out on these important benefits.

### ***Not Making Sure Your Profile is 100% Complete***

Always make sure that your profile is 100% completed. If you fail to do so you will not only be harder to find on LinkedIn, but you could also potentially miss out on business opportunities and connections the result of which means you don't get the full benefit of being on the network.

### ***Never Modifying Your Profile***

You should always pay attention to the numbers at which people view your profile and how often you come up in search as if these numbers are low it shows you that you need to recapture the attention of others. You can do this by potentially updating your titles and your headline and revitalising your descriptions every so often to try and attract attention and capture additional search traffic.

### ***Not Knowing the Difference Between a LinkedIn Profile and a LinkedIn Company Page***

There are two ways you can choose to have a presence on LinkedIn as a business owner. If you choose to create a company page you will be communicating as your business to others that have chosen to follow you and get updates from you to learn more about your business. With a LinkedIn Profile you will be communicating as an individual rather than as a business, allowing you to connect with clients, colleagues, and other members of your professional network.

### ***Not Being Selective About the Connections You Accept***

The people who you have connected with on LinkedIn are a representation of you and shows to others the kind of professionals you associate with. From this it is important not to just accept and connect with anyone just to appear more popular, instead look to connect with people you can genuinely learn from or be a benefit to and make sure you know who they are and what their credentials are.

### ***Not Sharing a Variety of Rich Media in Your Posts***

It is critical to embrace the visual and be creative with the updates you share by posting a variety of content types such as videos, infographics and SlideShare documents to engage and interest your connections. If you post unappealing, self-promoting content continually you will not attract the critical attention you need from others and will inevitably damage your reputation.

### ***Not Promoting Your Profile to Others***

You could have put together the perfect LinkedIn profile but if you fail to tell others about it then you miss out on connecting with new prospects. So, remember to promote your profile across all other social

media including a badge on your website, putting a URL on business literature and packaging and including it on your e-newsletter and email signature.

### ***Not Considering Your Search Optimisation (SEO) Efforts***

You need to consciously optimise your profile for SEO looking to at the very least have a completed profile and strategically place keywords throughout your profile. If you neglect your efforts and your profile is not SEO friendly, then you risk losing crucial visibility and being highly ranked in search and seen by others.

## **30 Days of LinkedIn Posts To Get You Started**

You might not feel like you have enough content to post every day, but the truth is you likely have plenty of content to use already—it's on your website, your blog, testimonials and more! While LinkedIn is a social network, it is more professionally driven and as such there are a few do's and don'ts.

### **Do**

- ✓ Avoid stock photos when adding images of yourself, your employees or clients etc.
- ✓ Make your content relatable but professionally written in a relevant and helpful way
- ✓ Cover industry topics and add images whenever you can
- ✓ Post regularly so you are consistent
- ✓ Always comment back—the more comments you receive, the more visibility you get
- ✓ Make the most of your headline

### **Don't**

- ✗ Don't just share posts, add your comments or write an original post instead
- ✗ Avoid long videos
- ✗ Get too personal
- ✗ Use links (LinkedIn rewards you for keeping people on their platform)
- ✗ Use constant hard sells and promotions

## **Here are 30 easy post ideas for the coming month to get the conversation started and catch the eye of your target market!**

### **1. Politics**

You can always find something interesting, topical happening in politics. As long as it is relevant, by tapping into topical world news you can demonstrate your worldly relevance and show your values.

### **2. Industry News**

Show your expertise and interest in helping others by sharing content about what could potentially affect your potential and current clients.

### **3. LinkedIn Articles**

Articles are a great way to share your expertise and skills in your own field.

### **4. Infographics**

Create and share an eye-catching and useful infographic on stats relating to your industry. Canva has some great templates to get you started.

### **5. How To's**

Sharing helpful content is always popular on LinkedIn.

### **6. Photos**

Whether it is a photo of yourself making your product or a bunch of your employees at a conference, people love to see the human side of business and the people behind the brand. If you are at an event/conference with influencers etc. remember to tag everyone in it and give a shout out to the event for extra reach and eyes on posts.

### **7. Share Your Opinion**

Share your opinion on a trending issue and ask for the thoughts of others – it is great conversation starter.

### **8. Videos**

The power of video is strong, and they are still viewed and shared more times than any other form of content.

### **9. Share a Post from Others'**

Sharing posts from other people and adding your comments to it is a great way to make new connections and share important issues.

## **10. Jobs**

For people and businesses alike, LinkedIn is first and foremost a place to find a job or a find the perfect candidate for one you have. So for you, it's the perfect opportunity to post a new job, share your clients' job listings, or ruminate on your dream job.

## **11. Create a List**

Top 10 lists are always a favourite on social media. For LinkedIn, you can make it relatable to your industry and work by creating lists on "10 Top industry Reads about X", or "Top 10 Blogs to Follow on X" for example. Don't forget to tag the authors/influencers you mention.

## **12. Share Your Highlights**

If you or your business was highlighted in the news, in a blog post or other social way, then share it on LinkedIn.

## **13. Share a Great Testimonial**

Take a wonderful testimonial you have, put it into a nice graphic and share it with the world.

## **14. Ask a Question**

Posing a question around a trending issue, controversial thought or something in your industry is a great way to generate engagement on LinkedIn.

## **15. Share a Sneak Peek**

Give your follower, clients and potential clients a sneak peek of something exciting to come in your business. It could be a logo in transition, a new product or service or a behind the scenes look at your process.

## **16. What You're Working On**

LinkedIn is a great place to share your recent work projects and keep your audience updated on what exciting things you are up to.

## **17. Business Lessons You've Learnt**

People love to hear about the journey that you have taken to get to where you are today. Share any lessons you have learnt along the way.

## **18. Humour**

LinkedIn is full of professional content so every now and then it's refreshing to see some humour. Your fellow industry professionals will appreciate a meme, article or joke etc. that you can all relate to.

## **19. Share Good and Bad Client Feedback**

If you had a wonderful experience working with someone then share it with your network. Likewise, if you had a bad one then share that too. Just don't burn bridges with everyone by coming across as rude and ranty, instead turn it into a tip post so others can avoid it happening to them.



## **20. Share Your Funny Moments**

We all have work moments we'd rather forget but they can also make for the funniest stories.

## **21. Share Your Professional Experiences**

Tell your own stories, about your work, your life, your experience that are important to you and that have value to your audience.

## **22. Share What's to Come**

If you have something new and exciting in the pipeline whether that's a change of business direction, a new line or a new office, share it with your network so they can be a part of your business journey.

## **23. Usefully Promote Your Product/Service**

Try to steer away from the hard sell when it comes to your business offering. When you do promote yourself, wrap it up in a useful way by explaining how your product or service is changing the business, the industry or the specific sector etc.

## **24. Ask Your Audience**

No one knows everything, so tap into your highly relevant network of industry professionals by asking them about something you would like to know, for example relevant questions about your profession.

## **25. Recommend Profiles of Other Users**

If you think a certain person will be useful for your network to connect with then share and do a little profile on that person. Just make sure you specify why and highlight the benefits of following and connecting with them.

## **26. Highlight Your Clients**

Share the profiles of your clients and put the spotlight on their activity and achievements in order to help them in their own business.

## **27. Introduce New Employees/Co-workers**

Introduce your partners and collaborators of your company, business, association, etc.

## **28. Share Useful Content**

Position yourself as a useful industry resource by sharing advice, courses, guides, etc. on personal and professional development.

## **29. Share any Offers/ Giveaways**

Contests and giveaways are one of the best ways a business can interact with their fans, build a strong community, and generate leads to turn into sales

## **30. Share Your Human Side**

Publish content related to personal reflections, with your doubts, insecurities, problems, fears, good and bad days, joys and sorrows and so on. After all, you are human, just don't treat LinkedIn like Facebook.

## Measuring Success

Like any other marketing strategy, the success of your LinkedIn profile must be measured against your business objectives. Analysing your LinkedIn metrics will show you a wealth of information and insights and help determine whether your profile is having a measurable impact and whether the data is reflective of the overall goals of your LinkedIn profile page.

### ***LinkedIn Profile Views***

LinkedIn will provide you with the number of people who have accessed your LinkedIn profile in the last week. Looking at these stats will give you a good idea as to whether you are growing your LinkedIn presence.

### ***Your Network Size or Total Connections***

You are only as visible as the size of your network, so having a large number of valuable connections is a good indication that you are expanding your influence and visibility on LinkedIn.

### ***Level of New Invitations***

Counting the number of new invitations is a good way of tracking that your network is continuing to grow. If you get a good level of new invitations every week then you know that you are growing your influence and potential value from your LinkedIn efforts.

### ***Level of Interactions on Updates***

Posting regular and valuable updates is a great way to build a presence and looking at the level of interaction your posts generate, is a good indication that readers are finding your posts insightful and are engaged with what you have to say. Potential employers and businesses looking to connect will search for influential people in their industry and the level of interactions is a good measure of such influence.

### ***Total Number of Recommendations***

When a member of your network recommends you, this acts as a confirmation that the skills you claim you have are genuine. Recommendations from colleagues, business partners and satisfied clients go a long way in the eyes of potential customers and business connections so having many genuine recommendations is a good indication that you are establishing your value and credibility.

### ***Number of Business Leads***

If you are on LinkedIn to generate new business, then measuring the number and quality of leads generated is essential. Keep track of how many requests for business you have had and make sure you establish the value and quality of these requests.

## **LinkedIn Maintenance Checklist**

### ***DAILY***

- ✓ Share a status update with relevant business content
- ✓ Check and respond to any messages, invitations, notifications and respond where appropriate
- ✓ Engage with and add your thoughts to relevant discussions in your groups
- ✓ Send at least 5 new connection requests a day by looking for other members in your groups and the 'people you may know' section. Ideally, tailor your 'invitation to connect' message
- ✓ Go through news feed and get updated on news and insights and add your thoughts and comments to any relevant discussions
- ✓ Review what your connections are up to or sharing on the activity feed and interact. This can create an opportunity to start a conversation and strengthen a connection., whether congratulating someone on a promotion or commenting on a link they've posted,
- ✓ Review new recommendations.
- ✓ Check out who viewed your profile. This is a great way to get intelligence on who is out there – including possible new connections.

### ***WEEKLY***

- ✓ If you blog, post your blog post in relevant LinkedIn groups
- ✓ Look to see if any new connections from other social media platforms have LinkedIn and connect with them
- ✓ Actively look for relevant groups you can join
- ✓ Follow 3 new companies
- ✓ Ask for 1-2 recommendations per week
- ✓ Connect with 2-5 new people per week
- ✓ Regularly include your LinkedIn URL everywhere you insert your contact information (i.e., email signatures, marketing collateral, business cards, etc.)
- ✓ Create/Import at least 2 relevant blog posts (via RSS feed) into the News section of your groups and ask for feedback
- ✓ Spend 10 minutes reviewing discussions on your most relevant groups
- ✓ Promote your Groups online at least once per week
- ✓ Invite 1-3 co-workers, colleagues, and customers to join and start discussions in your groups
- ✓ Regularly monitor the Q&A section for questions you are uniquely qualified to answer

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# LINKEDIN (FOR BUSINESS USE)

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Creating a LinkedIn company page can bring a wealth of benefits to your business. At a basic level, you can use this platform to educate others of the basics of your business and operations. However, you can take your LinkedIn marketing to the next level by utilising the many features LinkedIn offers for companies, in raising brand awareness, promoting career opportunities and the ability to showcase products and services to your potential customers. Whether you are just starting your business or already deeply establishes, LinkedIn is a trusted network by small businesses, so don't miss out on the ample opportunities it has to offer you and your business.

## Why LinkedIn Company Pages?

LinkedIn company pages, when done well, can be an important tool for increasing brand awareness and developing yourself as a thought leader through regular engagement with followers and through sharing rich, quality updates. Not only can it be an essential tool for brand visibility, but you are also presented with an invaluable opportunity to tap into a rich network of professionals in your industry that you can develop into a community who can be a captive audience for your business messages.

***LinkedIn Pages empower your organization to engage the world's professional community.***

- ✓ Engage your people and join the conversations that matter
- ✓ Post and respond on the go with the LinkedIn mobile app
- ✓ Share PowerPoints, PDFs and Word Docs
- ✓ Associate your Page to trending hashtags
- ✓ Discover content trending with your target audience
- ✓ Monitor activity with visual analytics
- ✓ Drive specific actions with a customizable call-to-action button
- ✓ Re-share your employees' best LinkedIn posts
- ✓ Re-share member posts that mention your company

### ***Free Marketing***

Think of your LinkedIn company page as a free and effective marketing tool that is used to drive people to your site. You are presented with a great opportunity to connect with potential customers, increase brand awareness, and establish yourself as an industry influencer through the content you post. An added benefit of having a LinkedIn company page is that through the use of strategically placed keywords, you can use your page to boost your presence in search engine results.

### ***LinkedIn's Hiring Capabilities***

The biggest mistake a small business can make is not taking advantage of LinkedIn's free small business offerings. If you're trying to attract potential candidates, LinkedIn is the first place where all the top talent will be looking. When you're actively hiring, LinkedIn allows you to publish job postings, as well as the ability to use LinkedIn's search to find potential candidates. By proactively searching you'll be able to find candidates that fit your hiring needs, reach out to them directly, and drive them to your job posting.

### ***Still not convinced? Here are 8 more reasons why you need a LinkedIn company page***

- ✓ Allows you to showcase your brand in a professional capacity
- ✓ Allows you to directly reach out to other professionals in your industry
- ✓ Is an invaluable resource for finding and recruiting employees
- ✓ Allows you to secure recommendations and endorsements of your brand
- ✓ Provides groups that you can use for research, networking and more
- ✓ Helps to amplify your brand to potential business partners and customers.
- ✓ Helps you to build up trust and authority in your niche
- ✓ Allows you to leverage your employees with professional profiles

## **Need to Know Facts, Stats and Tips about LinkedIn Company Pages**

- 57% of companies have a LinkedIn Company Page.
- 50% of B2B buyers use LinkedIn when making purchasing decisions.
- LinkedIn is the most-used social media platform amongst Fortune 500 companies.
- LinkedIn is the #1 channel B2B marketers use to distribute content at 94%.
- LinkedIn makes up more than 50% of all social traffic to B2B websites & blogs.
- 91% of marketing executives list LinkedIn as the top place to find quality content.
- 92% of B2B marketers include LinkedIn in their digital marketing mix.
- 59% of B2B marketers say LinkedIn generates leads for their business.
- 38% of B2B marketers say LinkedIn is generating revenue for them. More than 1 in 3 B2B marketers say LinkedIn generates revenue for their business. That's 3x more than Twitter, 4x more than Facebook & 19x more than Instagram.
- 46% of social traffic to corporate websites comes from LinkedIn.
- 65% of B2B companies have acquired a customer through LinkedIn.
- Only 0.59% of posts from B2B marketers come from company pages, but over 10% of leads generated come from them.
- 1 out of every 3 LinkedIn group posts that converted included a question mark in the subject line.
- The average length of a post that converts is 248 characters.
- The use of LinkedIn company pages grew from 24% in 2015 to 57% in 2016.

## Who Should have a LinkedIn Company Page?

LinkedIn is not only a resource for companies in B2B industries. Provided that the platform is approached and managed in the right way, many small businesses can profit from having an active LinkedIn profile, whether it is to find prospective employees or to forge new connections.

## Setting Up Your LinkedIn Company Page and Getting to Grips with The Basic Lingo

Setting up a company page on LinkedIn is a similar process to creating a business page on other social networks, the difference being that a more professional approach to its content and available assets is important. After all, your LinkedIn marketing goals, and therefore the way in which you develop your presence, should be to attract other professionals including industry leaders, potential employees, partners and more serious customers.

### *To create a LinkedIn Page:*

- Click the Work icon in the top right corner of your LinkedIn homepage.
- Click Create a Company Page.
- Select the Page type you'd like to create from the options given of Small business, Medium to large business, Showcase page or Educational institution.
- Enter your Page Identity, Company or Institution details, and Profile details information.
- Check the verification box to confirm you have the right to act on behalf of the company in the creation of the page.
- Click Create page. Note, If you receive a red error message, you may not meet the Page creation requirements or have reached the limit for Pages created.
- Click Start building your page!

### *Understanding the Basics*

LinkedIn is not tended to be used by people as intensively as is the case with Facebook or Twitter. LinkedIn's features and abilities are more reflective of a professional following so businesses should take advantage of this.

**Connections:** While Facebook has 'likes' and Twitter has 'followers', LinkedIn has 'connections'. LinkedIn aims to enforce strict rules governing how you can build up the number of connections to your company page, recommending that you only invite people that you know personally, not at the very least because they will have access to the email address that you provided when signing up. When you

invite someone to join your network, they will become a first-degree connection, while those who are connected to your connections are described as second-degree connections.

**Groups:** LinkedIn provides a groups area in which professionals can collectively join and share relevant content and establish meaningful relationships with one another in a professional capacity. Groups can be formed around individual brands, support groups, causes, publications, skills or industries. With almost 2 million groups on LinkedIn, there will likely be many groups that you take an active interest in and join. Likewise, you can also create your own groups.

**Recruitment:** LinkedIn provides a range of job search and recruitment features, and thanks to the network's high credibility and ease of use, many businesses are encouraging prospective employees to reach out to companies using the network.

### ***Use All The Features to Maximise Your Page***

Pages with complete information get 30% more weekly views so you need to make sure everything that should be filled out, is filled out and learn to utilize the features available to you.

- **Logo and Banner Image**  
Showcase your brand by adding your logo and a banner image. The recommended image dimensions are 300 (w) x 300 (h) pixels for you logo and 1128 (w) x 191 (h) pixels for your cover image.
- **Overview**  
Members can search by keywords so ensure your overview is relevant and filled with terms and phrases that accurately describe your business mission and purpose on LinkedIn.
- **Organization Info**  
Fill out your important information such as your website URL, location, the industry you are in and your company size.
- **Call-to-Action Button**  
Customize your button to align with your goals. The CTA options available are: Contact us, Learn more, Register, Sign up and Visit website. You can track who has clicked your CTA in visitor analytics.
- **Visual**  
Always try to include an image in your posts as they typically result in a 2x higher comment rate.
- **Video**  
Video gets 5x more engagement on LinkedIn so get on board with the growing trend of going live.

- **Documents**  
Showcase your important PDFs or PowerPoints.
- **Discover Trending Topics and Articles**  
When you select a target audience, LinkedIn will show you what topics and articles they're already engaging with on LinkedIn and then you have the option to get involved and share them directly to your Page.
- **@mentions**  
In your Page's Activity tab you will be notified of when your business is @mentioned. Re-share all your important mentions from everyone including employees, executives, and key customers.
- **Hashtags**  
Hashtags are a great way to reach a new, relevant wider audience. Identify 3-5 hashtags key hashtags for your business and add them to your posts when relevant.
- **Targeting**  
This fantastic free feature allows you to get your post in front of the right audience. You can easily target your organic Page posts to a specific language, location, university, function, industry, or company size and more.

## An Introduction to Paid Advertising on LinkedIn

LinkedIn's various paid advertising opportunities often get overlooked but provide some of the best targeting options of any paid online advertising solution. Paid advertising with LinkedIn works in much the same way as it does with Facebook or Google AdWords, its uniqueness lies in its ability for a greater focus on targeting a professional audience. With LinkedIn's advertising options you'll be able to target a very specific and relevant audience by choosing from a range of options based on the professional information included in their profiles, such as job titles, skills, interests and employers.

You can create paid advertisements through the Campaign Manager section of your account. If you are running ads on behalf of a business, link your campaign with a LinkedIn page.

The first step is choosing a relevant ad objective for your campaign. Do you want more website visitors? Do you want more people to become aware about your business? Or do you simply want to capture more leads? LinkedIn advertising gives you several objectives to choose from for three different stages of the sales funnel—awareness, consideration and conversions. At this stage, simply set the most relevant objective for your particular LinkedIn ads campaign. If you are just advertising for a job opening, you also have the option to set an objective to promote job opportunities.



The ad type you choose plays a vital role in the success of your campaign. If you are not sure which ad format would work best, test out different LinkedIn ad types to see which resonates best with your target audience. If you already know certain behaviours of your audience, you can eliminate certain ad types, for instance if you know some users hardly check their inbox then message ads will not be the best use of your ad budget.

***LinkedIn offers several different self-service advertising solutions. Here's a quick overview:***

- **Sponsored Content:** Looks just like a regular post with the addition of a CTA button and a “promoted” label. You can choose from three different formats of sponsored content—single image, carousel or video. It's a good idea to switch between the three options every once in a while to compare their performances and see which one works best.
- **Text Ads:** These are pay-per-click or CPM ads that appear on the right-hand side of a desktop screen. They include a small image along with a short headline and blurb.
- **Dynamic Ads:** Dynamic ads work a bit like text ads except they are more personalized. They will address the user by name and include their profile photo. Company spotlight ads, follower ads, content ads and job ads are some of the more frequently seen dynamic ads on LinkedIn.
- **Message Ads:** allow you to send personalized ads to LinkedIn members' inboxes. These messages tend to be more direct and personalized, making them extremely effective for targeting a highly specific niche audience.

**TOP TIP:** Combining two different methods of advertising on LinkedIn will help create a sales funnel to guide your customer along the way.

### **Sponsored Content Tips**

- Write ad headlines that are under 150 characters. Concise headlines lead to more engagement.
- Keep descriptive copy under 70 characters.
- Embed larger images instead of standard thumbnails. An image size of 1200 x 627 pixels is recommended. Content with larger visuals tend to get up to 38% higher CTR (click-through rates).
- Feature a clear CTA (call to action), so your audience knows how to act on their interest.
- Be specific with ad targeting, but not so specific that you narrow your audience.
- Analyse industry news instead of just sharing it. This will keep your content from feeling generic and help establish thought leadership in your field.
- Use rich media (like video, audio, or other element) by incorporating YouTube, Vimeo, and SlideShare videos. They play right in the LinkedIn feed, so your audience can engage organically.
- Include human interest stories that connect to your brand, and you will help your audience establish an emotional connection.
- Every 1-2 weeks pause the ad with the lowest engagement and replace it with new ad creative. Over time, this will improve your ad relevance score.
- Install the LinkedIn Insight Tag on your website, so you can track conversions and enable demographic reporting on your website visitors.

## Message Ads Tips

- Keep your message concise. Body text under 500 characters has a 46% higher CTR (click-through rate).
- Make sure the sender's profile image is a high-quality, professional image.
- Be personal and relevant. Mail Ads allow you to add macros such as first name to personalize your message to each recipient.
- Keep campaigns running all week. Sponsored Messaging ads see the highest open rates on Tuesdays and get the most clicks on weekends.
- Make your message interactive by adding hyperlinks. Messages with links in the body text have been shown to lift CTR by 21%.
- Use friendly, low-pressure language in your CTA. The top 5 performing CTAs for Mail Ads are: Try, Free, Today, Click and Apply.
- Try CTAs that are 1 or 3 words. These word lengths for CTA buttons show a 13% higher CTR.
- Add a banner image. The banner image is only visible to recipients viewing your ad on desktop, but this space is prime real estate.

## Dynamic Ads Tips

- Be descriptive in the main ad headline and text as this will help your audience understand your message.
- Feature a clear call to action so your audience know what you want them to do next.
- Be specific with ad targeting, but not so specific that you narrow your audience.
- For follower ads, exclude existing followers from seeing your ad to ensure you are gaining net new prospects.
- When your audience sees a Dynamic Ad in the LinkedIn desktop, there can be an ad headline and/or ad description included in the copy. Consider including only an ad headline to ensure a simple, clean message.

## Text Ads Tips

- Address your audience directly and grab attention with powerful headlines.
- Use a strong call to action like "Register Now" or "Sign Up Today!" in your copy.
- Including an image is optional, but you should always include one as they drive better results.
- Use a profile image if relevant. They perform better than objects or logos.
- Always link to a destination such as a customized landing page that matches the message of your ad.
- Continually try to improve your ad by testing multiple messages or versions of your ad creative to see which one resonates most with your target audience.

*TOP TIP: Make it easier for your prospects to turn into leads by using LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms with your sponsored content and Mail Ads. These forms auto-populate the form fields with relevant information about the prospect; all they need to do is click on the "submit" button and they are set.*

## ***How to Advertise on LinkedIn***

Now you are familiar with the ad options, you are ready to get started and connect your brand with the world's largest audience of active, influential professionals. To get started you will need Campaign Manager, LinkedIn's all-in-one advertising platform. If you don't have a Campaign Manager account, it only takes a moment to create one.

Campaign Manager lets you set a budget, select goals, view excellent visual reports on campaigns and have complete control over your campaign's timeline. In addition, the platform includes several features designed to help you meet your advertising goals:

### **1. Choose Your Objective**

Your campaign will begin with you choosing an objective to drive your campaign. The options are

- **Awareness:** Brand awareness
- **Consideration:** Website visits, Engagement, Video views
- **Conversion:** Lead generation, Website conversions, Job applicants

Your chosen goal whether that is for impressions or video views for example, will determine the rest of your campaign and how it is created.

### **2. Select Your Target**

Selecting your audience works the same way regardless of which type of ad you choose whether that's Sponsored Content, Message Ads or Text Ads. LinkedIn offers over 20 different audience attribute categories to help you reach the right audience for campaign success. For example, you can select from Company size, Member interests, Member groups, Skills, Job title and more. Getting your targeting right is crucial to running a successful advertising campaign – as getting it right leads to higher engagement, and therefore higher conversion rates.

### **3. Choose Your LinkedIn Ad Format**

Now it's time to create and manage your ad campaigns. You can use Sponsored Content, Message Ads, Dynamic Ads, Text Ads, or a mix of all four.

#### **Sponsored Content**

Sponsored Content appears directly in the LinkedIn feed of professions you want to reach, and comes in three options: single image ads, video ads, and carousel ads. Sponsored Content allows you to,

- Target your most valuable audiences using accurate, profile-based data
- Reach a highly engaged audience across desktop and mobile
- Drive leads, build brand awareness, and nurture key relationships

## Message Ads

Message Ads lets you reach your prospects on LinkedIn Messaging directly where then professional conversations happen. Using Message Ads, you can:

- Send direct messages to your prospects
- Drive stronger engagement and response than traditional email marketing
- Measure the value you are getting by seeing who is taking action on your message

## Dynamic Ads

Dynamic Ads use LinkedIn profile data - like photo, company name, and job title - to personalize ads. These ads are great for increasing your engagement.

- **Follower ad:** Promote their LinkedIn Page or Showcase Page and drive members to follow their LinkedIn page with a single click on the ad.
- **Spotlight ad:** Use these when you need to drive website traffic, spark an action like registration or showcase a new product.
- **Jobs ad:** Increase relevant applicants by personalizing ads to the talent

## Text Ads

Text Ads are simple but effective pay-per-click (PPC) or cost-per-impression (CPM) ads. Using Text Ads, you can:

- Easily create and launch a campaign in minutes
- Tailor messaging to those you need to reach
- Pay for only the ads that work – per click or per impression

## 4. Set Your Budget and Schedule

Now that you've selected your audience, it's time to set the budget for your campaign. There are three options:

- Cost per send (CPS) is used when you run Message Ads campaigns. You pay for each message that is successfully delivered.
- Cost per click (CPC) is often used for action-oriented campaigns like lead generation or event registration.
- Cost per impression (CPM) model is typically a better fit when brand awareness is the goal.

Along with choosing the right option for your campaign, you will enter a suggested bid, daily budget, start date, end date, and total budget. Regardless of the end date you choose, you can cancel your campaign at any time. It's also important to note that LinkedIn uses an auction system for bidding that rewards engagement, meaning you can win an auction without being the highest bidder.

## 5. Measure Your Campaign

Congratulations, your LinkedIn advertising campaign is live! Now it's time to see how your ads are performing. You can access your analytics by visiting Campaign Manager and selecting the campaigns you want to evaluate. You can track your campaign's overall impressions, clicks, social actions and budget. Social actions are initiated by LinkedIn members who interact with your content – it's organic, free engagement. Click through to each campaign to see how each ad within the campaign is performing. Using this data, you can edit your ads, refine your targeting, adjust your budget, and toggle ad variations on and off based on performance.

## Questions to Ask Before You Get Started Using LinkedIn for Business

### ***Who is Going to Set up and Maintain my Business Page?***

Before you begin, you need to have a clear idea of who is going to be creating and maintaining your LinkedIn business page. Whether you assign the role to an existing member of staff or hire an external social media manager you need to ensure that the person that will be in charge of representing your business on LinkedIn is capable, with the knowledge and experience of how to successfully utilise LinkedIn and ultimately make it a successful addition to your marketing strategy.

### ***How Should I Portray my Business?***

Like with any other public platform you need to consider how you are going to portray your business to others and how you are going to link it with your other marketing efforts. As part of this consideration you will need to address areas such as how you are going to tie your branding to the overall typography and visual aspects of the page to what type of voice you want to portray within your status updates and of course what your overall objectives are for the page. Making sure your business is presented in a representative and appealing way is crucial so you need to ensure you have a clear understanding of how you want your business to appear to your audience and how and what you can utilise to help you achieve it.

### ***What Images and Resources can I Utilise?***

LinkedIn allows you opportunities to utilise the visual on your page. From the large cover image to allowing a variety of content types to be shared within updates, it is vital that you pull your resources and utilise these areas to help make your business inform, engage and stand out from the crowd. So, look to see what visual aspects of LinkedIn you can use to your advantage, remembering to choose attention-grabbing images that reflect your brand and draws people in to learn more about your business. You also could and should explore the use of different types of content within your updates, from podcasts to

eBooks and using brand videos. Mixing up the types of content you share grabs attention and keeps people engaged so pull the resources you have at your disposal, from customer testimonials, product demonstrations videos, to webinar footage and behind-the-scenes pictures and share them with your audience.

### ***Have I Got a Clear Content Strategy in Place?***

Posting status updates lets you reach out to and share news with LinkedIn members who have chosen to follow your business page. From this you need to utilise this connection and form a content strategy that provides value to and resonates with your target audience. You will come to learn what content formats they prefer, what content they interact with most, at what times and how many updates you need to post daily or weekly to maximise effectiveness. Just remember to always share content that is going to entertain, inform and be relevant to your audience and you are likely to be rewarded with engagement and a two-way conversation with your followers that can create business opportunities, help you learn more about your customers' needs and other beneficial information that can aid your business in the future.

### ***How am I Going to Promote my Page?***

You need to consider how you are going to let others know about your page which will involve utilising opportunities both online and offline. Online you can use a variety of methods from using your other social media platforms to encourage others to visit your page, to adding a LinkedIn "follow" button to your business website and putting your company page's URL email signature and your e-newsletters. You can also encourage your employees to create their own LinkedIn profiles and ask them to interact with your business page by sharing statuses and directing connections to the page. Offline you can verbally tell others of your page in any conferences, meetings in addition to putting the URL on your business card, packing and anywhere else your customers/ prospects will see it.

### ***How am I Going to Measure the Success of my Page?***

How you define the success of your page will depend on what your overall objectives are for your page. LinkedIn provides a range of analytics that show everything from who's visiting your page to what types of content they click on, like and share and at what rates so remember to continually analyse these analytics to see whether you are meeting your objectives for your page and what if any areas are in need of improvement and revaluation.

# How to Build a Branded LinkedIn Company Page that Gets You Noticed

Your Company Page serves as the foundation of your business's presence on LinkedIn making it crucial that you develop and utilise this platform and its features in order to enhance your marketing, brand awareness and hiring and recruiting efforts.

## ***Know Your Audience/Competitors***

Thoroughly researching both your target audience and your competition on LinkedIn are crucial as they will help inform and dictate how you position your page. One of the first things you must do before you form your company page is to understand the audience you are trying to target, finding out important factors such as where they spend their time online, how they like to digest content and other important general demographics. The same level of research also needs to be applied to your competition. Look to find out what is and isn't working for your competition on LinkedIn, in what areas they perform well and where they don't so you can then apply the lessons learnt to your own strategy.

## ***Establish Your Presence***

Essentially, your company page acts as a central informational hub for visitors looking to learn more about your business. Creating a page is simple, to get started you just add your business logo, a banner image, description, specialties, industry, website, amongst other important aspects that help tell you and your brand story. The more difficult but highly important part of creating your page is the consideration you need to direct towards you're your SEO efforts and writing with language that will attract and target the audience that you want. In terms of SEO, LinkedIn itself is very SEO friendly and there are plenty of opportunities to insert keywords throughout your page. Enhancing your SEO and indeed attracting the right audience however is very much dictated by the language and keywords that you use throughout your page. Therefore, it is fundamental that you use rich, descriptive language embedded with powerful, keyword-rich phrases that clearly and concisely tells your readers who you are, what your visions are, your purpose, expertise and the skills/value that you offer.

## ***Foster Relationships***

LinkedIn provides businesses with a platform to reach the world's largest professional community. Whilst members are primarily there to discuss business, recruit new hires and inform others on products and services, the real value to businesses lies in using LinkedIn to foster relationships and working on interacting and engaging others in the community. Businesses that genuinely seek to get to know their audiences and provide valuable, informative and engaging content outperform those that seek to sell and broadcast to others.

### ***Attract followers***

After you have established and optimised your business presence on LinkedIn, you need to start attracting an audience. There are several simple and effective strategies to ensure your page is perfectly optimized to be findable and attractive to your target audience.

- ✓ **Get your staff and colleagues engaged on your page** – Announce to your employees that you now have a LinkedIn company page and if they have LinkedIn themselves, to engage with and share your Company Updates. To amplify your efforts, you can also encourage them to add a link to your Company Page to their email signatures.
- ✓ **Tell your customers and business partners about your page** – Once you have created and optimised your page you can utilise your existing contacts and drive traffic to your page by announcing your page in a compelling blog post, newsletter or email announcement.
- ✓ **Add a “Follow” button to your website** – On LinkedIn’s website developer.linkedin.com there is a host of widgets that you can assess and use to enhance your LinkedIn marketing. A popular and effective strategy is to implement the “Follow” button on your blog or website to attract the traffic from those sites and compel them to follow your company page easily with a single click.

### ***Engage Followers and Share Great Content***

If you have positioned and developed your page effectively, people will follow your company page as a way to engage and interact with you. Whilst LinkedIn is a professional space, you still need to realise it is a social network so actively and regularly facilitate that engagement by making the effort to communicate with your followers through asking questions, replying to comments, providing valuable updates and other engagement strategies. One of the most effective and important ways of creating relationships and engaging your followers is to encourage conversation, with your Company update being the perfect tool for starting those conversations.

Essentially, LinkedIn members want content that is valuable, informative, insightful and encourages engagement. As such every status update you post should embody these characteristics.

*LinkedIn currently provides four ways to launch your social media updates:*

- Status Update
  - Link Share
  - Photo Upload
  - Video Link Share
- 
- ✓ **Don’t be sales-y:** Overly promotional content with heavy emphasis on product promotion is not received well on LinkedIn. You can post business-related news or product announcements, but you must make sure they are delivered in a way that provides value and has a specific benefit to your followers.
  - ✓ **Post Once per Weekday:** Developing a consistent posting schedule encourages engagement, fosters familiarity and through providing valuable content regularly you can help develop yourself as an authority within your sector.



- ✓ **Post at Optimal Times:** Generally, updates posted are most effective during the common business hours of 9-5. However, you should experiment to see what works best for your company.
- ✓ **Include Links to Great Content:** Company updates that contain links have been found to have up to 45 percent higher follower engagement than updates without links. Therefore, ensure you share links to great and informative content and remember to write a compelling sentence to describe and accompany the link to encourage members to click through.
- ✓ **Tailor your Content to Specific Audiences:** Content that is customised and targeted to a follower's interests and needs is going to resonate best with them so ensure you write your updates with your target audience in mind. You can take your targeting further by using LinkedIn's Targeted Updates that allows you to match your message to an audience effectively. Targeted updates are a feature to help you promote content more effectively. After you have created a status update you can choose whether to share it with all your followers or a targeted audience that you can dictate based on geography, job, industry, company size amongst other factors.
- ✓ **Provide Content That Solves Problems for Your Audience:** LinkedIn offers you the opportunity to enhance your updates with rich content. Therefore, you should utilise this and team it with providing expert content that solves problems for your audience. From white papers, videos, how-tos, to blogposts and case studies, you can share a whole host of rich content to inform your audience. The savvy business will also put consideration into their SEO effort by include SEO-rich keywords throughout the content updates as this will add to the findability of your page when members search for keywords and will also help in your general SEO efforts since company pages are extremely SEO-friendly.
- ✓ **Ask Questions:** to amplify your efforts you need to encourage engagement with your followers and the best way to do that is to ask questions to your audience and let them have their say as on average, status updates that contain questions receive almost 50 percent more comments. They will embrace to chance to have their voice heard and to respond to questions about industry trends, their views on business developments, new products/services and more which not only benefits your brand awareness but you also get to know more about your audience from their concerns, needs and wants which can inform your strategy and make it more effective in the future.
- ✓ **Respond to Comments:** Your input doesn't end after you have clicked post on your status update, rather, you need to then respond efficiently and in a way that shows of your excellent customer service skills to the conversations that develop from your status update.
- ✓ **Listen to Conversations Outside of LinkedIn to Help Create Content:** By listening to relevant conversations outside of your LinkedIn page on your blog posts, forums etc. you are able to collect findings that show what types of content that are most popular and resonate best with

your audience, which you can then take and apply to your own LinkedIn content marketing efforts. By posting content that directly addresses your audience's interests and solves their problems your followers will find your updates interesting and hopefully share them within their own personal networks, which goes a long way in attracting an audience and establishing yourself as a thought leader within your community.

- ✓ **The Most In-Demand Content is Industry Insights:** According to numbers from LinkedIn, 6 out of every 10 LinkedIn users are interested in industry insights—the most-demanded type of content among LinkedIn members. Second to industry insight, company news which appeals to 53 percent of LinkedIn members. New products and services are the third most popular content, with 43 percent interested in this kind of update. From this, you need to always strive to share your informative expertise, be helpful and transparent when you post and you will appeal to the majority of your audience and meet the expectations your audience expect from you when they followed you on LinkedIn.
- ✓ **Help your Employees Help You:** Engagement on your profile can be a big help to those who happen to stop by, and it turns out that your own employees could be Employees are 70 percent more likely to click, share, and comment on an update than a typical LinkedIn user. Making them a great asset to build engagement on your page. From this, you need to take advantage of this and make it easy for employees to engage with your content. Send notifications and links every time you post or when particularly important updates go live and ask them for engagement.
- ✓ **Share Links for Engagement and Share Images for More Comments:** A study by QuickSprout found that including a link in your LinkedIn posts drives 200% more engagement. That same study also revealed that posting images on LinkedIn results in 98% higher comment rate.
- ✓ **Keep Link Titles <70 Characters:** When you're uploading these engagement-driving links directly to your LinkedIn Company Page, if the original post has a lengthy title, be sure to click into the title to edit it. Any title above 70 characters gets cut off when posted on your Page.
- ✓ **Keep Link Descriptions <250 characters:** The description associated with your status update is given 250 characters before it's cut off with an ellipsis. So similar to the link title limitations, ensure you shorten your Meta description for it to properly display on LinkedIn.
- ✓ **Generate Leads With Offers:** A HubSpot study found that LinkedIn is 277% more effective for lead generation than Facebook and Twitter. Take advantage of this by highlighting your great offers and including call to actions in your posts.
- ✓ **Learn and Optimize From Your Engagement Percentage:** Engagement will show you where to improve, grow, and change the way you update to your LinkedIn profile. By regularly reviewing areas such as the category of content you posted, who was targeted, and the day of the week and time of day that you posted you can help craft even more optimized posts the next time you update. Logged-in admins can find the analytics by clicking the dropdown menu

from the blue Edit button in the top right of your company profile. From the main insights page, you can view general information about the visits to your profile, including helpful demographic info that can show you the locations of visitors, seniority, industry, and even how many visits came from your own employees. To dig deeper, click on the analytics link at the top of the page, and you can view the complete stats for the updates you share. Engagement percentage measures the total number of interactions, clicks, and followers acquired for each update you post to your account. In other words, engagement percentage can tell you how many people, of those who saw your update, truly engaged with it.

### ***Learn, Analyse and Refine***

As with any other of your marketing efforts and campaigns, in order to determine your success, you need to measure your performance and use the data you collect to inform and develop your future efforts to optimise your campaigns and maximise their effectiveness. LinkedIn's analytics provide you with a wealth of data that you can explore to see vital insights into how your campaign is performing, from what content resonates best with your audience, to the best times to post and much more. In order to be successful on LinkedIn and get the most out of using it for your company you therefore need to regularly assess your analytics, listen to what they tell you and ultimately understand what that means you need to do in your future campaigns to ensure you are maximising engagement, driving brand awareness and maximising your ROI.

### ***Build a Stronger Employee Community with the My Company Tab***

The "My Company" tab is a dedicated space within your LinkedIn Page, that brings your workforce closer together by creating an employee community. Here you can celebrate key employee accomplishments, connect colleagues, celebrate promotions, anniversaries, and company new hires. It also surfaces trending content from your co-workers and recommendations to connect with people you may know at your business.

### ***Showcase Your Upcoming Events***

With the Events tab, your Page will show a view of your past, present and upcoming events on LinkedIn. The tab appears on the left-hand navigation of your brand's Page, making it easy for your followers and visitors to find and attend the events they are interested in.

### ***Get Good Insight Into Your Followers***

"View Page followers" is a feature that allows Page Admins to see the individual members who are following their Page. This provides you with an invaluable look at your audience so you can share the right content and build your LinkedIn community appropriately around the conversations that matter most.

## 10 Types of Posts You Should Share on Your LinkedIn Page

### 1. Video

Video marketing is so effective as it helps us learn by seeing. There is no need to imagine an idea or solution; we can watch it clearly play out right in front of us. The stats show how important video is to your LinkedIn Content Strategy, with a study finding that Video is 5x more likely than other types of content to start a conversation among members and LinkedIn members spend almost 3x more time watching video ads compared to time spent with static Sponsored Content.

### 2. Images Featuring Statistics

People love stats and sharing things that make them appear more knowledgeable. Get to work in Canva on creating some professional and eye-catching graphics that showcase some interesting industry stats.

### 3. Your Products and Services

Keep your audience up to date on the latest best practices, testimonials, updates and news on your products or services.

### 4. Share Your Business Journey

Give your audience an inside look at your businesses mission, vision and general day to day life. Don't be shy to celebrate company wins, milestones, your features in local press etc. and give a little shoutout to your followers and customers for helping you achieve your goals.

### 5. Humanise Your Brand

People buy from people, not companies. Humanize your brand and give your audience the opportunity to take a peek inside your company culture. Share pictures of your work day, your employees, behind the scenes and even the office dog!

### 6. Showcase Your Events

With LinkedIn Showcase Page feature, you can easily drive registration for events your business is hosting or sponsoring.

### 7. Promote eBooks & Other Useful Resources

If you have a new eBook out or have created a wonderfully useful resource that your target audience will find useful, share it with your network. This will help you on your way to becoming a valued industry expert and thought leader.

### 8. Share Content From Others

Collate useful links, articles and thoughts from other people and share them with your network if you think they will find it valuable. Remember to always tag in the author or any books that

you have mentioned and add hashtags to your content to be found with other relevant trending topics.

#### **9. Share Your Expertise Through Posts**

Not every post has to be about your business or services. You can easily build thought leadership and authority in your industry by sharing your thoughts and point of view on a timely or controversial topic. Starting a debate is a great way to generate engagement – just keep it clean and avoid anything too controversial that would go against your brand values or persona.

#### **10. Original Research**

Original research and insights perform extremely well on LinkedIn. Take the time to write informed, compelling articles on interesting aspects of your industry.

## **Tips for Success**

### ***Write a Compelling Summary***

The home page on a LinkedIn Company Page provides you with plenty of areas to showcase your business, from the cover photo to your company updates and importantly, an area for you to include a great description of your business. A visitor has come to your page to find out about who you are, what you have to offer and whether you're worth following or not, so it is vital that you create a clear, concise and compelling summary about your business that describes who you are, what you do, why they should take note of you. Ensure within it you also include strategically placed keywords to boost your SEO efforts and help people can find your LinkedIn Company Page through relevant searches.

### ***Utilise the Cover Image***

The cover photo appears in a dominant position at the top of the home page of your LinkedIn Company Page, so it is an important tool to utilise to showcase your business. Ensure you choose a photo that is good quality, visually appealing, captures people's attention and entices them in to take a closer look at your Page content and what else you have to show throughout your profile.

### ***Promote Your LinkedIn Company Page***

Your LinkedIn company page can be full of great content and ground-breaking ideas and services, but if you fail to promote your page and announce to the world that it exists, then chances are no one is going to see it. From putting a link to your page on your business card, email signature, to displaying it on your packaging and corporate literature, anywhere where your customers will see it is where you should

display and advertise your page. You should also explore and utilise the widgets available on LinkedIn's website such as the LinkedIn Company Follow button that makes it easy for people on your website or blog to follow your company on LinkedIn with just one click. Don't miss out on the areas offline that you can also utilise to promote your page, from telling those you meet at meetings of your page, to having a find us on LinkedIn sticker in your shop window.

### ***Use Featured Updates to Highlight Important Content***

LinkedIn offers the featured updates tool to help you highlight important content. So whether you want to promote an event, hype a sale or promotion, or draw attention to a specific piece of content, you can set any update that you publish as featured and it will then be highlighted at the top of your page. This is a great feature to utilise to direct attention to content that you want more people to see.

### ***Utilise the Rich, Visual Content to Capture Attention***

Using visual media throughout your profile is a very important aspect of your marketing as it makes your LinkedIn company page visually appealing to visitors and grabs their attention, making it more likely they will consume and share your content. From using a compelling image in your LinkedIn Company page banner, to enhancing your updates with videos and photos, there are plenty of opportunities for you to provide rich, visual content to your audience to capture attention.

### ***Make Your Updates Short and Sweet***

Your status updates show up in the news feed of a user's home page, so you want to ensure that you grab attention with your post and compel the user to click on your update and consume your content and potentially share it with their network. One of the best ways to grab attention is to post updates that are concise, include a high-quality and relevant piece of visual media (image, video etc.) and contains a compelling description of the link or content you are sharing that lets readers know what to expect when they click through, yet is enticing enough without giving away the whole story.

### ***Create Showcase Pages***

Enhance your LinkedIn presence by using showcase pages. LinkedIn showcase pages are an extension of your company page and enable you to highlight certain products or services on a separate page from the company page. This allows you to customize your messages to highlight and separate content for different customer segments. LinkedIn users can follow showcase pages for topics or products that they are interested in. This means that the content they see in their news feeds will be more focused and relevant to them, which is likely to result in higher engagement. Before you begin page should ensure you have three optimised and high-quality graphics – a cover photo, a logo and then a thumbnail. Once you create a showcase page, boost your impact by promoting it across any other social networks you are using. You can also add follow buttons and sponsor your posts to extend the reach of your showcase posts beyond your network.

### ***Take Advantage of LinkedIn Groups***

Groups are great tools for prospecting as you search for groups around certain industries and interests, so they are already segmented. Meaning that going in, you already know your audience. Choose several core members of your team to become involved in LinkedIn groups for certain segments. Prepare a strategy and guidelines for posting and interacting to make sure they feel comfortable and know exactly how establish and portray your business effectively within the groups. Over time, these team members will help position your company as a thought leader in the groups, hopefully resulting in when other members of the group are looking for a new product/service, you will be the first they think of.

### ***Boost Your Content with LinkedIn Ads***

LinkedIn targeting is a powerful tool for B2B, because it's so simple to target by job, industry, seniority, education, etc. Start with a consideration of your KPIs and they will guide which advertising option you utilise. For example, if you are looking for exposure, use pay per impressions. Or if you are looking for a sign up or a download, then paying for clicks is the best route to take.

### ***Effectively Manage Your Company Page***

The new LinkedIn Company Page Notification Center streamlines how you manage your company page, while allowing you to better understand which updates and content are performing the best. Access the new Company Page Notification Center dashboard, and you:

- ✓ Get an overview of how many likes, comments and shares you've received on the updates on your company page
- ✓ See how often your company has been mentioned by LinkedIn members on the platform
- ✓ View every publicly shared mention of your company on LinkedIn
- ✓ Comment and like as a company representative in response to mentions about your company
- ✓ Gain greater insights into how the content and messaging on your LinkedIn company page is performing

### ***Keep Track of Industry News Using LinkedIn Pulse***

Pulse is a great section of LinkedIn where you can discover popular articles and trending content tailored to your interests. It can be found under Interests in LinkedIn's top navigation. Browse Top Posts to monitor the most popular content on LinkedIn Pulse, or click the Discover more link found via the hamburger menu to find and follow specific influencer contributors, publishers, or topic-related channels. You can sign up for daily or weekly email summary notifications of Pulse news or instant notifications when influencers you're following post something new.

### ***Check out LinkedIn's Content Marketing Score & Trending Content Resources***

If you are a LinkedIn Business Solutions customer, you can learn how impactful your organic and paid LinkedIn content is with the Content Marketing Score and Trending Content resources. Your Content Marketing Score measures user engagement with your Sponsored Updates, Company Pages, LinkedIn Groups, employee updates, and Influencer posts then provides recommendations on how you can improve your score, and thus the effectiveness of your LinkedIn content. LinkedIn's Trending Content resource also provides you with a sense of which types of content are most popular on LinkedIn in your industry, highlighting the most popular content being shared on LinkedIn for various audiences and topic segments. Monitoring this will help you to understand what content your company should be creating and sharing on LinkedIn to generate the most engagement. Business Solutions customers can contact their LinkedIn account executives any time to learn more about these resources.

### ***Use LinkedIn to Generate Leads***

A study by HubSpot found that traffic from LinkedIn generated the highest visitor-to-lead conversion rate (2.74%) of the top social networks, almost 3 times higher than both Twitter (.69%) and Facebook (.77%). LinkedIn can help you generate leads. To get the most out of LinkedIn for lead generation, aim to promote and share links to your blog posts and landing pages in your Company Status Updates, LinkedIn Groups, on your Showcase Pages, and in calls-to-action placed in posts you publish via LinkedIn's publishing platform, Pulse.

### ***Create your Own Industry LinkedIn Group***

In addition to joining already established groups, consider creating a LinkedIn Group of your very own. Create a group based on a relevant industry-related topic and become a LinkedIn Group administrator. You can then use this group to establish yourself as a thought leader in your industry, grow a community of advocates, generate new marketing content ideas, and help generate new leads.

### ***Email Your LinkedIn Group***

One of the perks of managing a LinkedIn Group is the fact that you can literally email the members of your group -- up to once per week. These emails take the form of LinkedIn Announcements, which are messages sent directly to the email inboxes of group members (if they have enabled messages from groups in their settings). This is a prime opportunity for generating leads from LinkedIn, particularly if you have built up a robust group of users.

### ***Recruit New Talent via LinkedIn Careers***

Looking to fill a position on your team? Build the Careers section of your Company Page, which you can use then to promote your available job openings. There are more robust customization options available for this section if you purchase a Silver or Gold Careers package. There are several benefits of doing this,



firstly it enables dynamic, customizable modules (that display different version of the page based on viewers' LinkedIn profiles), analytics about who is viewing the page, direct links to recruiters, video content, etc. In addition to allowing you to add a large, clickable cover image that can be transformed into a call-to-action. This image can direct users to a specific job, a list of jobs and opportunities located on your website, or examples of your company's culture. The overall look and feel of your Careers page will depend on what information and images you choose to include, such as a list of jobs, recent updates, people at your company, a summary section for your careers, and what employees are saying about working at your company. If you're actively recruiting candidates with specific skills and expertise, don't forget about LinkedIn's Advanced Search feature.

### ***Add the Company Follow and LinkedIn Share Buttons to your Website/Content***

Promote your company's LinkedIn presence and help grow the reach of your Company Page by adding the Company Follow button to your website and to your various content assets like blog posts, emails, and landing pages to extend the reach of your content to LinkedIn users.

### ***Analyse and Learn With Your Company Page Analytics***

Use the Analytics tab for Company Pages to evaluate the performance of your Company Page. Access your page's analytics by clicking the Analytics tab in the top navigation of your Company Page. This tab offers very useful data about the effectiveness of your page's reach, status updates and engagement, as well as information about your page's followers, where they came from, how your following has grown over time and how your data compares to other companies, etc.

## **Measuring Success**

### ***Lead Generation and Conversion Rates***

Ultimately you are on LinkedIn to generate leads and potential buyers, so it is vital that you measure the rates at which you are driving both. By analysing the rate at which your updates are driving leads and by tracking conversions you can ascertain whether you are maximising your ROI with your current efforts. If you fail to see leads or conversions generated from your content, then you need to reevaluate your strategy.

### ***Performance of Updates***

LinkedIn analytics allows you to see impressions, clicks and engagement rates for any given update. Analysing these metrics for each update you share helps inform you on what content resonates best with

your audience which you can take and apply to future content creation efforts, ensuring that you are targeting your audience's needs and interests with every post you create.

### ***Engagement Rate***

Engagement on LinkedIn is reflected in many forms from the amount of times members have clicked, liked, commented on and shared your content. Measuring engagement rates is an important process as it shows your performance in terms of your audience and whether you are successfully attracting and engaging them with your updates. By gathering a better understanding of what content draws most comments, likes or shares, and similarly what content doesn't you are helping to better your campaign as the lessons you learn can be adapted and applied to your future efforts.

### ***Follower Demographics***

By analysing who the people that are following your page you can gather important insights into whether you are attracting the right type of targeted audience with your current efforts. Regularly take the time to assess your audience demographics: where are they from? What industry do they work in? What is their occupation? These are just some of the many characteristics you should be looking at. If you find that the people you are attracting are the ones you are targeting and match your ideal buyer persona then you know your current efforts are working, similarly however if you find you are attracting an audience that is not relevant to you or one you want are not targeting then you need to explore what areas you need to change, whether it's the content you are sharing to how you have described your page, whatever the reason is, analysing your audience demographics is an important part of measuring your success.

### ***How You Compare to Others***

Another way of assessing how well you are performing is to do a comparison of others on LinkedIn that are similar to you and compare your efforts. If you find your competitors are using LinkedIn company pages then look to see important figures such as their total follower growth over time, to their engagement rates and what content they post that is received well (through interactions, comments etc.) as looking at this information will help you better your own campaign for example, if you see areas in which they appear to perform well then you can apply that to your own efforts.

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# YOUTUBE

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YouTube is the most popular video hosting and sharing platform with over two billion active users. YouTube is widely regarded as the second largest search engine, topped only by Google and because people use YouTube the same way they use Google, it is a very valuable marketing platform. Businesses have utilised the benefits of YouTube, recognising that with the power of video, YouTube's massive audience, and AdWords' targeting tools, you can reach potential customers all around the world. Having the ability to embed a YouTube video player on your website or blog also means you can easily share your video on Facebook, Twitter and other social media network making it easy to share your story and build your business online.

## What's Good About YouTube?

- A great tool for improving search engine rankings
- It is a free platform for advertisements
- Demand for video content is on the rise YouTube alone gets about 30 million visits a day
- Videos can show off your brand personality allowing you to be more personal and approachable for your audience.
- Because you can present information differently, people are more engaged with your content therefore you're rewarded with better engagement and brand recall

## What's Not so Good About YouTube?

- Not useful for businesses where videos are not relevant or useful to them
- A successful YouTube channel needs a consistent uploading schedule so is not suitable for companies without the time or resources to keep producing quality videos

## Should your Business Have a YouTube Channel?

If your target audience and customers are watching videos on YouTube related to your industry, then you need have a YouTube channel to attract that audience. YouTube is great for businesses that are naturally visual and regularly produce videos that are informative, demonstrations of products or services and generally entertaining content that will be valued by a certain group. The sheer audience size of YouTube attracts many businesses to YouTube but with a lot of competition to face businesses should only use YouTube if they can regularly and consistently produce good quality, varied, fresh and entertaining videos.

## Need to Know Facts, Stats and Tips About YouTube

- Over one billion hours of videos are watched on YouTube every day.
- YouTube has over 1.9 billion monthly active logged-in users.
- On mobile devices alone, YouTube reaches more adults aged 18-49 during prime time than any cable network does in an average week.
- 75% of adults report watching YouTube on their mobile devices.
- More than 70% of YouTube watch time is generated from mobile devices.
- YouTube mobile ads are 84% more likely to hold attention than TV ads.
- Over 50,000 years of product review videos have been watched on mobile devices over the past two years.
- In 2018, YouTube was the most popular IOS app.
- 46% of millennials (25-34-year-olds) have increased their YouTube usage since last year.
- 70% of millennial YouTube users watched a YouTube video to learn how to do something new or learn about something they are interested in.
- YouTube is the world's second largest search engine.
- YouTube is the second most trafficked website behind Google.
- YouTube users collectively watch over 46,000 years of content each year.
- 68% of YouTube users watched a video to help them make a purchase decision.
- 80% of YouTube users who watched a video to help them make a purchase decision said they watched the video at the beginning of the shopping process.
- 95% of the most popular YouTube videos are music videos.
- 47% of on-demand music streaming was listened to on YouTube.
- There are twice as many small- and medium-sized businesses advertising on YouTube since 2016.
- Four times as many people prefer watching video on YouTube rather than on social media platforms.
- YouTube users watch more than 180 million hours of content on TV screens every day.
- YouTube users are three times more likely to prefer watching a YouTube tutorial video compared to reading the product's instructions.
- "Relaxing" and "feeling entertained" are the top two reasons viewers watch YouTube.
- Relaxation videos like soap cutting and slime playing experienced a 70% increase in watch time in 2018.
- Comedy, music, entertainment/pop culture, and "how to" are the four most popular content categories on YouTube.

## Why You Need YouTube for Your Business

### ***Brand Awareness***

Videos are a powerful branding tool and if done right can leave a lasting impression on an audience. The vast audience of YouTube together with the easily sharable format that comes with a video means the potential for your video reaching a new and extensive range of potential customers is a powerful benefit of YouTube.

### ***It's Free and Very Popular***

YouTube is a free channel that millions of people view every day. Together with the fact that it is the second most popular search engine in the world and the third most visited website on the internet, your business could greatly benefit from having a channel where you can reach millions of people and benefit from free promotion.

### ***It's Great For SEO***

YouTube is a great resource for improving search engine rankings. Video is a highly sharable content format and is shared easily between people on social media so look to optimise your channel with SEO friendly wording and embed videos onto your website with targeted keywords. Do this and you will likely benefit from an increase in Google's search results and attract natural traffic to your website over your competitors.

### ***It Shows Your Personality and Creativity***

The internet can often be an impersonal place but having a YouTube Channel offers a creative platform for you to share your brand story and gives your business a human face. People are more likely to purchase products or services from a business they feel like they already "know" and having a channel that you regularly update can help create a community and allow your viewers to feel like they connect with your business.

## **Creating Your YouTube Account and Getting to Grips with The Basic Lingo**

All YouTube accounts need to be directly tied to a Google account. If you already manage your business Google My Business or have an existing Gmail Account, you can use that to create a YouTube account for your business. If you do not, you will need to create a Google account.

- 1. Go to YouTube.**
- 2. In the top right, click Sign in.**
- 3. Click Create Account.**
- 4. Choose For myself or To manage my business.**

Once you've signed into YouTube with your Google Account, you can create a YouTube channel on your account. YouTube channels let you upload videos, leave comments, and create playlists. Importantly if you create an account this way only you will be able to access it through your account. If you are a bigger business or have employees/freelancers working with you that will need access to your YouTube account then you should certainly create a YouTube account as a Brand Account. You and others can jointly

manage a Brand Account through your own Google Accounts. Your account can have multiple owners and managers but the account must have one primary owner so control can stay with yourself overall.

Your Google account automatically gives you a personal YouTube account. However, to create a YouTube account for your business, you will want to set up a brand account.

1. Log into YouTube using your Google account details.
2. Go to your YouTube channels page. If you've never created a YouTube channel before, you'll only see your personal account. To create a new brand channel, click Create a new channel.

## Your YouTube Channel Page

Your YouTube dashboard is filled with a whole host of tabs. The first two tabs that are you need to fill out with information are the "Home" and "About" tabs.

### *Home Tab*

Your profile photo will default to the one you're using on your Google+ account, so if you ever want to change it, you'll need to do so there. YouTube also has the option for a cover photo. To upload your photo, click the "Add channel art" button in the middle of the cover photo area. Alternatively, with your mouse, hover over the photo space to reveal an edit button in the upper right corner to open a drop-down menu. Select "Edit channel art" and then either upload or drag the image you want to use. The recommended file size is 2,560 x 1,440 pixels but bear in mind that not all of that file will appear on your profile.

### *About Tab*

After you have got the visuals in place, click the "About" tab on your channel's home page. Three buttons will appear in this section to guide the further development of your YouTube account.

- **Channel description:** In this text box, enter a description of your brand and/or the type of content that you will be sharing.
- **Links:** This section helps you connect YouTube to your other online profiles. You can select whether to display links overlaid on the cover photo and how many links will appear there. You can also decide whether or not to show when you created the account and how many views your channel has.
- **Add Channels:** Use this area to highlight your partners, your different departments, or your individual employees. If you don't know of any other YouTube channels you want to feature, you can leave this section blank and update it as you get acquainted with the platform.

## **YouTube Creator Studio**

After personalising your channel, head over to the “Creator Studio” to create content and manage your page. There are several different tabs on that dash.

**Dashboard:** The customizable YouTube dashboard is the place to go to quickly scan what’s going on with your page. There are 5 different widgets that you can add, remove or rearrange to help you quickly get a high-level view of your page.

**Video Manager:** The video manager is the place to go to manage all of your content. There are also a few unique features that can be found on this page.

- The ability to live-stream a life event
- A tab to access your search history
- A tab that shows you all of the videos you’ve liked
- A place to go to create video playlists

***Top Tip:** As you upload more videos, be sure to take advantage of the ability to create playlists. Navigate to the Video Manager, which is in the same drop-down menu as the Dashboard. Mark the videos you want to include and then click on the “Playlists” button. In this menu, you can opt to create a new playlist or add on to an existing one.*

**Community:** YouTube is just like any other one of social media platforms in that you develop an online community that you need to maintain and manage. As your presence continues to build, it’s important to continue to engage with your audiences and build relationships.

**Channel:** There are a ton of features in the channel section that help you personalise your page. An important feature of this is to decide whether or not you want to monetize your site. If you upload a lot of high-quality content that you think will get a lot of views, this could be something for you to look into as a means of generating revenue.

**Analytics:** YouTube has a robust analytics suite and just as you use analytics in every other social media platform you use to marketing your business, you should actively use this data to help guide the kind of content that you produce. Some of the key things to look at are:

- Audience Demographics
- Playback Locations
- Traffic Sources
- Devices Watched From
- Audience Retention

Now that you have the basics down, it’s time to start creating some content. The first clip you’ll want to upload to the network is a punchy trailer for your channel.

## 7 Key Questions to Help Form a Successful YouTube Strategy

Before you jump in and start uploading there are several key strategic elements you must consider in order to create a YouTube marketing strategy that will ensure your YouTube channel is going to be in line with your business objectives and ultimately be a successful addition to your social media marketing strategy.

### ***What are my Objectives for my YouTube Channel?***

Having well-defined goals and a clear vision of your objectives for your YouTube channel is imperative for many reasons. It not only influences the type of video content you'll share but also impacts on what analytics you will look to in how you measure your success. Whether you want to use YouTube as an outlet to showcase new products, drive sales or boost your website traffic, having clear objectives is crucial to how successful your presence on YouTube will be.

#### **Common YouTube Marketing Objectives**

- Brand Awareness
- Increase Authority
- Product Support and Advice
- Supporting PR efforts

### ***Who am I Going to Target With my Videos?***

In order to have the chances of a well-received video, you need to have a clear idea of who you are going to be targeting with your videos. It is vital you take the time to gather important facts about your target audience ranging from their average age to what styles and formats they prefer to receive their information, as this will help ensure you create videos that are directly tailored towards them and are likely to resonate with them therefore improving the likelihood of success.

### ***What Am I Going to Upload?***

One of the most vital aspects of YouTube marketing that you need to know is that people come to YouTube to be informed, educated and entertained and not to watch boring sales adverts. The key is to provide video content that is going to interest, inspire and entertain your target audience as well as enhancing your business image and brand. Whether you will shoot your own videos or hire an external business, remember to share good quality videos that someone in your industry or sector will be interested in viewing. You can upload videos of anything from behind the scenes, product demonstrations to a day in the life of a member or staff, anything that you feel will enhance your brand and interest your viewers. Just remember to pick a niche, be consistent and give the viewers what they want.



### ***Do I Have a Clear Content Posting Strategy in Place?***

Having a well-developed uploading schedule is an important step towards building a repeat audience and subscriber base and impacts greatly on how well you build a successful YouTube channel. The two things that will dictate your publishing schedule are your business goals and resources and what your audience wants. So, whether you upload a new video once a week or every fortnight, ensure each time it is consistently good, targets your viewers' needs and is reflective of your brand.

### ***How am I Going to Promote my Channel?***

There are many resources you can utilise to help you promote your YouTube Channel. From embedding your YouTube videos and playlists to your business's website and blog to putting your YouTube URL link onto your corporate literature and business cards. Remember to also promote it on your other social media channels by sharing a direct link to every new video you upload.

### ***What are my Competitors Doing?***

Knowing what types of videos your competitors are producing and how their audience responds to them are both key pieces of information that you need to know. It is by looking at how well (or how badly) they are performing on YouTube that you can get valuable information that you can apply to your own strategy. If they are performing well then find out why and apply that to your own efforts and equally if you see areas in which they are performing badly, then see these as opportunities for you to improve on with your own channel. Additionally, if you find that none of your competitors are using YouTube you have to ask yourself why, are they missing an opportunity? In which case you need to establish yourself on YouTube first or are they doing the right thing in not having a presence on YouTube? And if that is the case then you need to establish whether you really need to be on YouTube yourself.

### ***How am I Going to Measure my Channel's Success?***

To measure your success effectively you need to first establish your objectives for your YouTube presence as this will dictate what analytics you will measure. Analysing your YouTube Analytics on a regular basis will show you a wealth of valuable information from how many people watch your videos, how they discovered your videos, how many subscribers you have, as well as how many likes, dislikes, comments and shares each of your videos has received. Tracking these metrics will help show you what types of content resonate with your viewers that will help guide your future video content creation.

## Uploading: What, and How Often?

With over 300 hours' worth of video uploaded onto YouTube every minute, it can be hard to make your videos stand out from the crowd. Below are several ideas for powerful and engaging videos that you can create that will generate engagement and ensure people are actively searching for them.

### ***Video Interviews and Thought Leadership***

You can display your business as thought leaders in a specific industry by offering free information that demonstrates your skills and intelligence and provides genuine value for users. This can be done either by presenting strategic, academic content such as speeches or seminars, interviews with industry influencers or by offering tips about a given field of knowledge.

### ***How-To Videos and Tutorials***

YouTube is a great place to find how-to videos as many people prefer to get instruction from a video rather than a text-heavy article. If you have specific and uncommon knowledge within your business that others would likely benefit from learning about, simple tutorials can be a valuable asset.

### ***Behind the Scenes Video***

Behind the scenes videos are often successful because they are of interest to your customers and show them something that cannot get elsewhere. For ideas you could post a video of how your product is made or interesting insights from those who work in the back end of your business. A behind-the-scenes video can highlight the hard work and dedication you and your employees put into your business and show a part of the process that customers may not witness from their end.

### ***Testimonial Video***

Many customers use reviews in their decision to make a purchase. By sourcing video testimonials of past customers with great reviews, you will add an extra dimension to your reviews section that will show you are offering a really good product or service as happy customers have taken the time to document how happy they are. You can invite your best customer advocates in to make the video at your location, or you can ask them to record and upload videos themselves.

### ***Special Events Coverage***

If you are attending a special event such as a conference, trade show or dinner, be sure to bring your camera so you can post event photos and record footage of the event that can then be shared with your audience.

### ***Site & Facility Tour***

For businesses that strongly rely on their business space to attract and keep customers, for example hotels, restaurants and art galleries, a video site and facility tour can be a great way to boost your brand image.

### ***Media Highlights***

If your business has been in the news recently, a video recap of your media highlights can show your authority, show your product/ service off in a new light and remind or show those that may have missed the original broadcast. Remember to attain any necessary rights to the video footage to avoid copyright infringement and video deletion.

### ***Webinars***

Webinars are a great marketing tool, so if you already have regular webinars where you discuss anything from general news and insights surrounding your industry to demonstrations of your product, record and utilise them by repurposing them for use on your YouTube Channel and share them with your audience.

### ***Promotions***

When you have a new promotion running, from an offer, to a discount or freebie giveaway you can use promotional videos on YouTube to attract attention to your channel and potentially get your offers seen by a wider audience.

### ***Product Showcases and Demonstrations***

If you have a particular product you want to put in the spotlight or show off a products great use or indeed how to use it then creating a video is a great way to inform your audience.

*Although it takes some experimentation to find the best publishing schedule for you, there are two things that should always be considered and will dictate your posting schedule; your business goals and what your audience wants.*

How often to upload videos is different for everyone, for those that have a lot of special effects in their videos they may only upload once a week due to time constraints or others that upload less technical videos may be able to upload several times a week. What is important for being successful on YouTube is that you make an uploading schedule and stick to it. Scheduling is not only important for your audience; it is also needed to help keep yourself on track. If you know that you have set a goal to upload a video to YouTube once a week for example, then you will make sure to get it done. If you do not have a schedule, then it is easier to put off the work and neglect your channel and it will not become a successful addition to your social media presence. Ultimately how often you upload will vary depending on what works best for your business, goals and audience so it is important to experiment to find a posting schedule that works for you. So, the first step to determining your ideal posting frequency is to find the perfect balance between what you want are capable of and what your audience wants.

To maximise the benefits of having a YouTube channel you need to ultimately ask yourself, Can you keep this schedule consistently? Can you always publish high-quality content at this rate? And will you have enough content for this schedule? Once you have discovered the best times to post, being consistent with your publishing schedule has the benefit of expanding your reach and drawing in an audience.

## How to Create a Branded YouTube Channel that Gets you Noticed

### *Create an Audience-First Content Plan*

The key to building an audience and maintaining a successful presence is to always provide content that is valuable, relevant and entertaining to the viewer. YouTube provides you with a great platform to showcase your visual creativity and show that you understand and care about your audience enough to consistently produce a variety of videos that address consumer needs and genuinely interest and provide value to them. While it's certainly worthwhile to put a product demo or two on your channel, you won't generate more leads unless you provide deep value. To get that deep value you must get to know the things that your audience resonate with such as:

- **Video Style.** Do they prefer seeing a person in vlogs, animated videos, interviews, tutorials, etc.? You may find they prefer more than one video type, so you will have to experiment to find the sweet spots.
- **Video Length.** Do they prefer short snappy videos of a couple of minutes or do they prefer a comprehensive 15-minute one?
- **Topics.** When you are using YouTube for marketing, it's important to create content about your area of expertise. However, feel free to experiment by covering topics related to your industry that your target audience will also be interested in. This will provide a little something different for your audience and will avoid your channel becoming too repetitive.

### ***Make Your Videos Easy to Find***

YouTube is very heavily saturated with videos making it harder than ever to get your videos noticed. Simply uploading your video and waiting for people to come across it will not suffice. Rather, you need to make it easy for the right audience to discover your videos by applying several key factors in your videos;

- Use relevant keywords and search categories to attract your target audience
- Embed your YouTube videos onto your website
- Share your videos across social networks
- Include your website URL in the video description
- Ensure your video is categorised and tagged correctly and relevantly
- Consider advertising to give your videos a boost

**TOP TIP** Scroll down to the Channel recommendations section and turn on the option to allow your channel to appear in other channels' recommendations.

### ***Appeal to your Target Audience***

With so much choice for the consumer, getting your video noticed can be a difficult task. The key to ensuring you stand a better chance of getting noticed is to do your research and find out exactly what your audience is watching and searching for on YouTube and then apply this knowledge to your own efforts. You will better reach your audience if you know what type of content resonates best with them and directly provide solutions for them or answer their questions and queries with your videos.

### ***Thoroughly Brand your YouTube Channel***

Your YouTube channel needs to act as a hub of your brand making it clear to the viewer who you are when they arrive on your page. Ensure you fully utilise the customisable features of your channel from the background to the video cover image to ensure that you create a branded environment for your audience where they trust that it is your brand page and where they are welcomed and encouraged to interact. There are several key areas to utilise to ensure you don't miss any branding opportunities on your page;

- Include links to your website
- Effectively and clearly communicate your brand and purpose in the description
- Ensure all creative aspects (colours, graphics, typography etc.) reflect your brand.

### ***Know Your Limits***

Maintaining a successful YouTube presence takes a lot of consistent and continual effort. From uploading content to creating titles, responding to comments, tracking analytics and general promotion, maintaining your account can easily become a very time-consuming role. From this, ensure the person

who maintains it has the time, talent and expertise to run it effectively as you are publicly representing your brand to a vast audience online, so you do not want to give them a negative impression by ineffectively using YouTube. If you find yourself or the person running your account is struggling, then strongly consider outsourcing to a specialist who has the adequate skill set to represent your brand well. Your business can only benefit from you knowing your limits and realising when the time is right to get a professional on board.

### ***Listen to and act on What Your Analytics Tell You***

Track your videos performance through your analytics will help you to understand your audience, how they interact with your videos and what content resonates best with them. Armed with this information, you gain a very advantageous position where you can use this information to help you optimise your future videos to ensure you are directly addressing your target audience needs, making them more likely to keep coming back to your channel and share your content with others.

### ***Be Sociable and Engage Your Audience***

To fully utilise the benefits of YouTube for your business you need to embrace the social aspect of the social network and continually interact and engage with your audience and other users. You need to be actively dedicated to your page looking for opportunities to interact with others and respond to comments and feedback on your videos. YouTube has very much developed into an active online community which you need to be a part of and participate in. There is much to gain in engaging with users and audiences from potential business opportunities, partnerships with other users and by listening to your audience you can get to know them better helping to create better content that is going to attract them in the future.

### ***Keep Your Channel Updated and Fresh***

Once you have set up your channel, developed a solid posting strategy and perfected your channel design you are well on your way to a strong YouTube presence, but your work is by no means finished. In order to keep the attention of your audience and attract new ones you need to actively keep your channel updated with fresh content and continually analyse your analytics to gauge your audience response to your videos to ensure you are consistently targeting their needs with your videos. Continually look to see how you can better enhance your audience's experience with your videos and act on what your analytics tell you, positive and negative about your efforts and respond accordingly.

### ***Be Aware of YouTube's Future Trends & Updates***

As new technology emerges, and YouTube grows and develops it is likely to make changes that can affect your business marketing. Ensure you stay aware of changing trends and utilise any new developments within YouTube and a broader technical sense to help better your videos and audience video experience.

# How to Build a Following and Amplify Your Impact

Uploading your video is only the beginning. The next challenge is to promote your YouTube channel in order to get maximum exposure and attract attention. Rather than relying solely on search engines, there are several other key techniques you can employ to help get your content noticed.

## ***Make Your Video Easy to Find***

You need to ensure that your videos are easy to find both within YouTube and externally in areas such as search results. To make your videos easily searchable you need to focus on several key areas and optimise them. Firstly, you need to ensure you title your video effectively, by strategically placing target keywords and clearly telling your audience what your video is about. Secondly you need a well-written description for your video ensuring you are as descriptive and keyword rich as possible. You will also need to include a URL that directs traffic onto a page you choose. Finally, do not forget to utilise tags for your video being sure to include all related keywords in the tags field. There are many other factors that will affect how easily get found from the number of page views to subscribers, however the above factors are the easiest for you to control and utilise so ensure as a basic start you optimise them as fully as you can.

## ***Create a Channel Trailer***

Just like a movie trailer, your YouTube channel trailer is an opportunity to preview your channel. Channel trailers auto-play when an unsubscribed visitor lands on your page. So it's best to assume they're new to your page, and possibly your brand. Introduce your brand to new viewers. Offer a sneak peek of what viewers can expect from your channel. Build intrigue and anticipation that leaves viewers wanting more. Make a bold brand statement. Most importantly, give viewers a good reason to subscribe.

## ***Make Your Job Easier With Tools***

There are many YouTube marketing tools available for business that will help you get into a good marketing routine. Here are some of the most popular ones.

- **YouTube Audio Library**  
A good YouTube video is backtracked with music and sound effects. Avoid infringing on copyright by sourcing directly from YouTube's free audio library.
- **Canva**  
Easily create professional looking channel and video art with ready-made, pre-sized templates on Canva. This tool offers an expansive stock photo library, and the option for full customization and branding.
- **Hootsuite**  
Hootsuite takes a lot of work off your plate when it comes to YouTube. Use it to keep track of content calendars, assign tasks to different team members, moderate comments, Schedule

videos and with their impressive analytics dashboard you can see how your YouTube marketing fits into your broader social media strategy.

- **Mentionlytics**

With this tool, you can keep tabs of videos created about your brand, comments that mention you, and more.

### ***Use YouTube Ads***

With YouTube Ads, you can promote your video to potential customers on YouTube and across the web exactly when they are searching for your product or service. You simply create your Ad, set your budget and choose options that speak to your target audience and Google will automatically position your video in front of the people who are reading, searching for, or watching online content related to your business. You will only pay when someone actually watches your video and you can also choose how much you want to pay per view. This means you can control your costs while promoting your business around the world.

### ***Embed Your Video on Your Website***

By embedding your videos onto your website, you provide your website viewers with a direct view of your YouTube channel making it easier for them to subscribe to your channel and increase your video views. Also look to enable video embedding on your videos that allows other users to post your videos to their websites; this will give you an extra avenue for a potential whole new audience.

### ***Leverage Your Other Social Media Platforms***

One of the easiest ways to promote your videos and build an audience for your YouTube channel is to leverage your existing social media platforms and share regular updates linking to your videos across them. Every time you upload a new video share it across your other networks such as a Facebook, your blog and Twitter using a keyword-rich title and make sure your descriptive post includes appropriate and complementary content. Also take the time to add a link to your YouTube channel in your social network descriptions. You should also promote your channel across your other assets from including your YouTube URL in your email signature and business cards to your packaging and other corporate literature.

### ***Send Your Videos to Others You Know Will Find Them Useful***

Whether it's a past client, a friend or an owner of a website you found through a search or directory, if you feel that your video can be useful or relevant to someone then share it with them. Many viewers discover YouTube videos through other sites, blogs and word of mouth, so make sure you target those website owners or clients that will be likely to find your videos interesting and informative and thus share it with their own audience. The traffic you can generate from this could become a significant source of views for your videos.



### ***Promote Your Video Offline***

Leveraging your offline assets is an easy and effective way to promote your YouTube channel. Anywhere your customers or clients interact with you is a place where you should have a link to your YouTube channel. From adding a link to your channel on your traditional advertising, a YouTube playlist on a monitor in your store or office and across your corporate literature there are plenty of ways for you to promote your channel beyond the online world.

### ***Encourage Engagement and Interactivity***

By creating an online community who actively get involved by sharing their views, commenting, interacting and sharing your content you will successfully utilise the social aspect of the network and be rewarded with a band of loyal fans who will help you better your business through constructive opinions and suggestions as well as helping you build your fan base as they are likely to recommend you to others and share your content. There are many ways to encourage engagement from your audience from asking them questions, to running contests and promotions and by creating high quality content that naturally gets people talking.

### ***Work with Other YouTube Users***

Other YouTube users are not all to be seen as just your competitors. Rather, by collectively working with other users you will help build your network and gain exposure to new audiences. Look to support other users and look for opportunities where you can work together and help promote one another. From sharing their content to collaborating on an upcoming major event, there are many ways for you to give a boost to other businesses and get one in return. You will ultimately get a lot more out of YouTube as a marketing channel if you realise and utilise the social community-based aspect of it.

### ***Ask for Subscribers***

One of the most basic ways to increase your subscriber count is to ask for people to subscribe in your videos. Ensure each video you create contains a compelling call to action that directs and encourages the viewer to click on the subscribe button right above your video. A simple formula commonly used for this means is too clearly and compellingly state to the viewer 1. What you want them to do 2. How they are to do it 3. Why they should it. As an example, you can say "Make sure you stay up to date with my latest videos and effective marketing tips by subscribing to my YouTube channel by clicking the button above this video."

### ***Add a YouTube Widget and More to Your Website and Blog***

If you already have a website and/or blog that is attracting traffic, you already have a great opportunity to leverage those visitors to encourage more subscribers to your channel. The best thing is that by simply adding a widget to those pages, those website and/or blog visitors can also subscribe to your

YouTube channel at the click of a button. Make sure you explore your blog and website features to see what widgets you can utilise.

### ***Consistently Interact***

To be successful and see results on YouTube, you need to not see it simply as a place to host your videos and instead realise that it is a community filled with brands and people that are wanting to be informed, entertained and interact and engage with other users. Therefore, regularly and actively take the time to interact with and support other members of the community, this means both in terms of interacting with your audience and customers but also in terms of supporting others in their YouTube marketing efforts. In doing so you also utilise one of the best ways to build a following of subscribers as by leaving real and genuine comments on channels and videos and by liking and subscribing to those channels that you have found valuable to you, you are likely to be rewarded with reciprocations from other channels which can open you up to their followings and subscribers.

### **Add Cards, Bumper ads, and Watermarks to Promote your Channel**

Cards, bumper ads, and watermarks are clickable CTAs you can add to your YouTube videos. These are effective because they are relatively unobtrusive, offering minimal disruptions to the viewing experience.

- **Cards:** small, transparent CTAs that expand when clicked. Use these to direct viewers to your website, purchase pages, or even other videos on your channel.
- **Bumper ads:** six-second video ads appearing at the start or end of a video.
- **Watermarks:** Custom subscribe buttons visible only to non-subscribers. You can use a branding watermark to embed your channel logo across all videos on your channel. When you add a watermark, viewers can directly subscribe to your channel if they hover over the watermark when using YouTube on a computer. It won't show to users who are already subscribed to your channel.

### **Follow YouTube's Video Specifications**

Start by uploading video footage that is optimized for YouTube. Fortunately, the platform has a range of video specifications to suit a variety of needs.

Recommended sizes: 426 by 240 pixels (240p), 640 by 360 pixels (360p), 854 by 480 pixels (480p), 1280 by 720 pixels (720p), 1920 by 1080 pixels (1080p), 2560 by 1440 pixels (1440p) and 3840 by 2160 pixels (2160p)

- Minimum size: 426 by 240 pixels
- Maximum size: 3840 by 2160 pixels
- Supported aspect ratios: 16:9 and 4:3
- Recommended specs: .MOV, .MPEG4, MP4, .AVI, .WMV or .MPEGPS
- Maximum file size: 128 GB
- Maximum length: 12 hours long

## **Add End Screens to Videos**

End screens are a powerful tool which can help extend watch time on your channel by directing viewers to something next at the end of your videos (e.g. They can be used to point viewers to other videos, playlists or channels on YouTube; to call for subscriptions to your channel; and to promote your website, merchandise and crowdfunding campaigns.). You can add them to the last 5-20 seconds of a video, and they appear on both desktop and mobile. It's important to note that your video has to be at least 25 seconds long to have an end screen. Other interactive elements, like card teasers and branding watermarks, are suppressed during the end screen. To add an End Screen;

- Open the Videos page in YouTube Studio beta and select a video.
- From the left-hand menu, select Editor.
- Select Add an end screen.

Note: There are times when end screens may be skipped, such as when your video is playing in background mode. Also, end screen size and placement can vary based on the dimensions of the screen so try to avoid pointing to an exact place on-screen.

## **Tips for Success**

### ***Quality Over Quantity***

When it comes to uploading videos, it is always quality over quantity. You will need to thoroughly invest time and effort into the quality of your videos and if you find yourself struggling to keep producing quality videos and end up uploading just for the sake of it, you need to reassess your publishing schedule and make it more realistic for you. Your business will not benefit or gain a positive reputation if the content you produce is not engaging, well presented and consistently good so always make producing high quality and engaging content your priority.

### ***Know When Your Audience is Online***

YouTube gives creators the access to data which lets them know when their audience is online. This data will pinpoint which hours during the week your channel's audience is most active. This is a very handy feature as you can use this data to determine the best times to broadcast live streams. You may also choose to schedule your future videos to publish when most of your audience is online. However, it's worth noting that YouTube says there's no conclusive evidence indicating that's a good tactic. Try it and see if it works for you.

### ***Don't Overlook Tags***

YouTube's content is organised on a tag word basis therefore it is key that you take the time to attach the correct tags to your videos. This will ensure that your videos will be attracting the right kind of traffic and attention.

### ***Choose Your Featured Video Wisely***

First impressions are everything therefore make sure the video you select for your featured video has an eye-catching title and is high-quality, engaging and relevant. Remember to switch the featured video regularly in order to keep your channel fresh and appealing.

### ***Pick a Niche***

To become an authority and a valued source of information it is best to create content that lets you thrive in a specific niche rather than trying to appeal to a generic wider audience. Focus on your specialty within your industry and position your channel to project that clearly, showing your audience that your channel is the best place to receive valuable, informative and relevant information that is targeted to their needs.

### ***Brand Your Channel***

It is vital that your channel is representative of your business so you must apply your branding strategically and consistently. This consistency also applies to other aspects such as the voice you portray so ensure in the beginning you create a YouTube video marketing plan that works in conjunction with and enhances your overall online and social media marketing plan. This will ensure you have a consistent image portrayed across all your online social networks.

### ***Strategically Place Keywords***

To make yourself more easily found in search results you need to pick your keywords and strategically place them throughout your channel. Put them in your title, description and tags and beyond YouTube place them in the supporting content you post when sharing your videos across your other social networks. YouTube video marketing is a great tool for helping your SEO efforts so spend the time to choose the most appropriate and effective keywords and utilise them.

### ***Choose a Good Thumbnail***

A thumbnail is one of the things that can catch the attention of a viewer and acts as a first impression of your video therefore it is essential that you choose a thumbnail that is eye-catching and representative of the content within your video. You should look to A/B test your video thumbnails to see what resonates best with your viewers. To get you started, consider these best practices:

- For tutorials and walkthroughs, showcase the finished product.
- For testimonials and reviews include the photos or logo of the products you are reviewing/showcasing.
- With videos that are listing something, tease some of the items by including their photos.
- As a general rule, you'll want to include the person that is in your videos in your thumbnail.
- Place short eye-catching text around your thumbnail.
- Have a signature look for your video thumbnails for brand consistency and general visual appeal. You can get this once you've determined which thumbnail styles get you the most views.

### ***Don't Forget to Use Call to Actions***

You can place call to actions strategically throughout your channel, from End Screens on your videos to links within your video description. It is vital that you encourage the viewer to take the next step after they view your video from encouraging them to subscribe, directing them to your blog or website or simply to encourage them to leave a comment. Ensure you utilise effective calls to actions by making them simple, clear and concise.

### ***Keep Your Video Short & Sweet***

Keeping your videos short and sweet will help keep the attention of viewers and make them more likely to watch your video until the end- an important factor if you choose to put your call to action at the end of your video. Ensure you share consistently good content in every video you post and utilise your analytics and comments as they will show you important aspects of your videos from what makes people stop watching them at a certain point to how well the subject matter has been received.

### ***Be Innovative, Fresh and Clever***

YouTube has become a heavily saturated channel for marketing, so you need to make your videos stand out and demand attention. Take the time to break the mould of generic business videos and look to inject humour, fun and creativity into every video that you share.

### ***Utilise Every Opportunity to Make a Video***

Every video you upload is part of your story that you share with your audience. Everything from your ups and downs, your proudest achievements, to your charity work and the people behind your business are all areas in which you can document on video and share with your viewers. So, whenever you launch a new product, attend a conference or find a new way to use one of your products, look to see if it is an event that you can document on video and produce an engaging and fun video from it.

### ***Partner with Other YouTuber Channels and Influencers***

There has never been a better time to connect with YouTube influencers. While you should be creating your own videos, it's equally beneficial to reach out to more established YouTube creators who can help you tap into a far greater reach of relevant, target audiences. Consider sponsoring a video, sending free product or trials for a review, or even doing a close long-term partnership together.

### ***Get Vlogging***

Vlogging can be a great way to engage with your audience, build a following, sell products or services, generate leads, or, if you hit the big time, make your fame and fortune!

#### ***Vlogging Tips***

- Have decent video equipment that producing a good quality video and make sure that the microphone you choose lets you record high-quality audios.
- Try to script your videos as this will ensure you don't forget to address important points and keeps you away from unnecessary rambling.
- Most abandons occur in the first 10 seconds of a video. To keep viewers watching, you need to come up with an engaging intro so they stick around for the whole thing.
- To avoid the nerves and come across like a professional a tip is to imagine yourself talking to a friend instead of concentrating on the camera.
- Use closed captions to not only help deaf people to enjoy your content, but to boost your YouTube video ranking. YouTube's algorithm reads the transcript if it is provided, and considers the keywords within it. So, make sure you say your main keyword out loud in the video when recording.
- Find vloggers in the same niche as yourself and reach out to them for cross promotion so you can mutual benefit.
- Use royalty free music as if you use copyrighted music, YouTube will mute your videos and you will not be able to monetize them. Or worst case scenario after three strikes you will be banned.
- To save you a lot of time and ensure you keep a visual consistency for your channel, make templates for thumbnails so all you have to do is quickly change the text and image.

### ***Verify Your Account to Access More Features***

You need to verify your YouTube account in order to access some pretty key features of YouTube such as being able to upload videos longer than 15 minutes and create custom thumbnails for your videos.

- Go to [youtube.com/verify](https://youtube.com/verify)
- Choose your country, then select whether you want to get your verification code by text or automated voice message.
- Enter your phone number.
- Enter the verification code you receive and click Submit.
- Click Continue.

Your channel is now verified and the above features will now be enabled on your channel.

### ***Join the YouTube Partner Program to Unlock Even More***

Joining The YouTube Partner Programme (YPP) gives creators greater access to good YouTube resources and features such as direct access to the Creator Support team and revenue sharing from ads being served on your content.

There are Minimum eligibility requirements to join

- Follow all the YouTube monetisation policies.
- Live in a country or region where the YouTube Partner Programme is available.
- Have more than 4,000 valid public watch hours in the last 12 months.
- Have more than 1,000 subscribers.
- Have a linked AdSense account.
- They also strongly suggest enabling 2-Step Verification for your Google Account

1. Sign into YouTube and click your profile icon in the top right.
2. From the dropdown menu, choose Creator Studio.
3. In the left menu, click Channel. Then, in the menu that appears, click Status and features.
4. Find the Monetization box and click Enable.
5. Follow the steps that take you through the application and agree to terms.
6. Wait. It currently takes more than a month for YouTube Partner Program applications to be reviewed.

### ***Learn From your Favourite Channels***

You will be on YouTube yourself in your spare time watching videos no doubt, so put your mind in the eye of a viewer and ask yourself why you are watching these videos. Take note of what holds your attention and why. What keeps you coming back to these channels? Is it the content? The presenting style? The originality? Do you like that they are high-production, or shot more casually?

Look up your favourite brands and do the same exercise. Start to think about your YouTube content strategy and what you can implement yourself to improve your videos and channel.

Even if you don't watch videos yourself in your spare time you can still do this important exercise by taking a look at YouTube's trending videos. Even if these videos have nothing to do with your business or industry, there is a lot you can learn from them. Have a checklist ready and ask yourself - What is the most common length of these videos? Do they have a host? Do they add special effects or text overlays? How does the channels drive views, subscriptions, and engagement?

## **Common Mistakes to Avoid**

### ***Choosing a Poor Title***

Your video can be full of valuable and interesting information for your target audience but if you fail to attract their attention by choosing a poor title you risk them not seeing your video at all. You need to make the title of your video appeal to your target audience by making it concise, eye catching, include utilised keywords and make it descriptive of what your video is actually about.

### ***Choosing a Poor Description***

If you fail to provide enough information or fail to evoke interest with your description you could essentially discourage that potential viewer from watching your video. You need to make your description compelling enough to draw viewers in and make them feel they cannot go away without watching your video. Within your description you should include a relevant call action and be clear and concise with what information you share.

### ***Using Weak Tags***

Using weak tags that are not relevant or representative of your video won't encourage the people you are targeting with your video to find it. Therefore, you need to fully optimise your videos and make them easy to find within search results with appropriate tags playing a considerable role in this.

### ***Only Uploading Videos to YouTube***

Once you upload a video you need to promote your video and utilise every promotion tool and resource you have available. The more places you promote it, the more potential audience you have so share your video on all your social media platforms, send it to others who may find it useful and promote it across all other promotional tools you have available.

### ***Ignoring Comments***

You need to remember the social aspect of YouTube and make sure you are open to and respond to comments, positive and negative, as this shows you have a vested interest in what your audience thinks about your content. If you fail to respond to those who take the time to comment, then you miss out on vital interactions from others that could have led to potential business opportunities. So, make sure you encourage your audience to leave comments on your videos and respond and engage with people when necessary.

### ***Having Unrealistic Expectations***



Many business owners have the expectation that their video will be an instant success and go viral, but you need to understand that there is no overarching formula for going viral. Whilst having millions of views is brilliant, realistically it may not happen to you so make sure you realistically define what you are hoping to achieve from using YouTube for your business and work to those objectives.

### ***Uploading Inconsistently***

Your YouTube channel will not enhance your marketing efforts if you do not maintain a consistent posting schedule. In the beginning you need to create a posting schedule that is consistent and works for you and your audience and will help you avoid rapid uploading then months of no activity on your channel. Being consistent allows those who subscribe to know when to expect a new video from you which will keep your channel active and attract new viewers.

### ***Ignoring Analytics***

Not taking the time to analyse important information about your videos such as your viewer retention, likes and comments means you fail to see what is working with your videos and what isn't. You are making videos for your audience so it is vital that you look at your analytics and see how your audience responds to them as this will help show vital information that can help guide future video creation and ensure that you are directly targeting your audience needs with every one of your videos.

## **Measuring Success**

Like any other marketing strategy, the success of your business YouTube channel must be measured against your business objectives. Analysing your metrics will show you a wealth of information and help determine whether your channel is having a measurable impact and whether the data is reflective of the overall goals of your business page. Below are several key metrics you need to analyse to measure your video success.

### ***Total Views***

Whilst relying solely on views as a form of measurement is not advised, looking at your video's views can provide you with some important information. You can use this metric to determine what type of content resonates best with your audience and looking at your average number of views per video can help you gather a clear understanding of what video content performs well and which does not that will help guide your content creation in the future. Treat your video views as the basic foundation on which to analyse each of your individual video's success.

### ***Significant Discovery Events***

Having a clear understanding of how traffic was driven to your YouTube videos is essential as it shows you insights into which marketing channels drive traffic to your videos over others that will help you learn how to drive relevant viewers to your videos in the future. Looking at the videos significant discovery events will show the noteworthy referral sources of viewers to a video so whether it is a certain website or social network that is sending you the most traffic, you can actively focus your efforts and adjust your video promotion strategy accordingly.

### ***Audience Demographics***

By viewing the demographics of your viewers, you are able to gain a deeper understanding of who is watching your videos and whether they are right demographics and therefore, relevant viewers you are targeting with your videos. Look at each individual video to understand who is watching and try to draw conclusions from it such as whether your audience changes over time and whether they represent a certain segment as analysing the data in this way can help you make informed decisions for future content creation and marketing strategies.

### ***Ratings, Comments and Favourites***

Analysing your audience feedback will help give you a greater understanding of what content resonates best with your audience as these actions require more of an effort from your audience than them simply watching it and so is often a greater indication of engagement than just the views of your videos. Looking at the feedback from ratings, to likes and comments will show you what videos your audience are engaging with which can help you understand what your audience needs and wants from a video that will help guide what type of content you need to continue to produce in the future.

### ***Audience Retention***

Examining your audience retention metrics will help you to see vital information such as how long viewers watched your YouTube video and at what point your viewers stopped watching your video. Whilst these metrics can't tell you why they stopped watching as this can vary due to many factors including the videos content, length and more, they can shed light on the weaknesses in your video content. For example, if your metrics show all of your viewers stop watching your video at the same point you can attempt to understand why and look to see whether it's the videos content, length or subject matter that turned them off which can help prevent you having the same issues in the future for the later videos you create.

### ***Video Shares***

The number of shares across social networks each of your videos receives is a big indicator as to which videos are popular and perform well allowing you to take this information and apply it to future videos.

### ***Subscriber Rates***

Monitoring the growth of your subscriber base will help you understand the reach of your YouTube content and whether you are continually interesting viewers with your videos. By analysing the subscribers you have gained or lost on every video you can get a sense of what content resonates best with your audience and as such you can use this information to make your videos more effective in the future. This will encourage more subscribers which translates to more people who have the potential to see your channel's video content on their subscriptions stream on their YouTube homepage.

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# PINTEREST

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With over 442 million active users, Pinterest is one of the fastest growing social networks. It is essentially a collection of virtual pinboards allowing you to 'pin' images of products, places, services etc. you like or want onto your own boards. The visual aspect and appeal of the site has captured the interest of many businesses, from retailers to designers who are using it as an online portfolio or product catalogue. A pin could be a gift, recipe or even a quote and has become extremely popular with people who use it in lots of different ways from planning their weddings, decorating their homes to organising recipes.

Businesses that are visual based have recognised the benefits of Pinterest learning how adding the Pin It button to your website is a great way of driving sales and a great tool for SEO as people can then pin and repin those images on Pinterest and then click to your website to buy your product/service.

## What's Good About Pinterest?

- Pinterest is visual based so is perfect for businesses who want to showcase their products and services through pictures
- Users want to grow their presence on Pinterest by pinning and in doing so they act as marketers on your behalf

## What's Not so Good About Pinterest?

- Not useful for businesses in industries who don't have visual appeal
- The demographics are gender biased; women make up 77% of the user base

## Which Businesses Should be on Pinterest?

Businesses that naturally lend themselves to visual marketing should have a presence of Pinterest. From food shops, restaurants, photographers, DIY stores to wedding and fashion related businesses you can appeal to a wide audience and showcase your products and services through your striking photos or videos.

## Need to Know Facts, Stats and Tips about Pinterest

- Total Number of Monthly Active Pinterest Users: 442 million
- Total Number of Pinterest Pins: 50 billion+
- Total Number of Pinterest Boards: 1 billion+

- Total Number of Pinterest Users who save Shopping Pins on Boards Daily: 2 million
- 77% of Pinterest users are Females.
- Men account for only 7% of total pins on Pinterest.
- Millennials use Pinterest as much as Instagram.
- Median age of a Pinterest user is 40, however majority of active pinners are below 40.
- 87% of Pinners have purchased a product because of Pinterest.
- 72% of Pinners use Pinterest to decide what to buy offline.
- Over 5% of all referral traffic to websites comes from Pinterest.
- Pinterest said 80% of its users access Pinterest through a mobile device.
- 93% of active pinners said they use Pinterest to plan for purchases and 87% said they've purchased something because of Pinterest.
- Two-thirds of pins represent brands and products.
- Food & Drink & Technology are the most popular categories for men.

## Why You Need Pinterest for Your Business

### *Traffic and SEO*

One of the most beneficial marketing benefits Pinterest offers is the ability to drive more traffic to your website. Pinterest provides you with plenty of optimization opportunities on which to boost your SEO. From giving your pins descriptive names, to incorporating hashtags and including a reference link back to your business website, all these factors work together to ensure you get seen in search results.

### *Showcase Your Products*

Displaying products through interesting and engaging boards gives customers a shopping experience that can influence purchase behaviour. By showcasing your products and services through good quality and eye-catching pictures and videos you present to a wide audience an interactive guide of what you have to offer.

### *Build Your Brand Identity*

The images pinned on your board should represent the personality and values of your business. With an image you are not only showcasing a product, but you are also portraying a lifestyle that can and should be used to compel and inspire potential customer to want to get involved and buy your product/service.

### *Interact with Customers*

Pinterest is about creating conversations. It can be a powerful word of mouth tool, generating interest in your company and get people talking about all things relevant to the brand, with the opportunity for content to be shared virally amongst members.

## Creating Your Pinterest Account and Getting to Grips with The Basic Lingo

To use Pinterest, you first have to sign up for an account. Importantly, using the main sign-up page creates a personal account and for businesses, it is important that you make sure you specifically sign up for a business account. This distinction is important because business accounts, whilst remaining free like personal Pinterest accounts, give you access to useful features to help your business thrive on the platform, one example is the analytics tools. Although if you have a personal account but want a business profile, you can convert your personal account to a business one on a desktop and keep your Pins and followers.

To sign up for a business account, you need to sign up at specific business sign up page and enter your email address, a password, the name of your business and your website (though this last one is optional). You also need to select what type of business you run from a drop-down menu. From there, you will then be directed to set up your profile.

When you log in to your Pinterest account, you are taken to your home feed. This is where the most recent pins from the other Pinterest accounts you follow are displayed and features endless scrolling for seamless browsing.

Across the top of each page you visit on Pinterest, there is a large search bar. To the left, you'll see the Pinterest logo (clicking this will take you back to the home page), as well as menu options for Ads and Analytics. To the right, there is a drop-down menu, which displays links to all the categories you can browse through on the platform.

Alongside that, you will see a "+" button and a chat bubble button. The + allows you to quick-add a new pin or create a new ad, and the chat button pulls up a drop-down menu with three options: News, You and Messages.

- **News:** displays trending pins and other information such as updates
- **You:** shows your notifications from when other users interact with your pins
- **Messages:** displays your messages with other Pinterest users.

Clicking on your profile picture will show a drop-down menu with options to go to your profile to see all your boards and pins, access your settings, billing, ads support, the platform's Help page, and to log out of your account.

## ***Pinterest for Business: Important Terms to Know***

- **Pinner:** The branded term for a person who uses Pinterest.
- **Pins:** A pin is the primary type of post published on Pinterest. Pins include an image or video, text, and can link back to an original source.
- **RePins:** When someone pins a post they didn't create to one of their boards.
- **Promoted Pins:** Regular pins that a business has paid to promote. These pins appear in the home feed and search results and include a "Promoted" label. Promoted video pins, carousel, and app pins are also available.
- **Rich Pins:** Rich Pins provide more information on the pin, from price information to install buttons. They are available in four formats: Product Pins, Recipe Pins, Article Pins, and App Pins.
- **Shop the Look Pins:** Allow businesses to add product tags to their creative. This makes it possible for Pinners to shop the look by tapping on the pin's white dots.
- **Boards:** Used to group pins around a certain theme or topic.
- **Group Boards:** The same as boards, except more than one person can add content.
- **Secret Boards:** A secret board can only be seen by its creator and invited collaborators.
- **Protected Boards:** Protected boards house promoted pins and are only available to advertisers. Pins on these boards can be seen across Pinterest, but the boards do not show on profile pages.
- **Save Button:** A browser plugin for Chrome, Firefox, or Microsoft Edge. You can install it on your website so that Pinners can save your products to their Pinterest boards.
- **Audience Insights:** Pinterest business accounts have access to analytics via Audience Insights.
- **Pinterest Lens:** A camera tool that lets users take a picture of something and find related content on the site.
- **Pincodes:** Essentially QR codes that can be scanned digitally, or on packages and displays, and link back to your board of profile.

Pinterest is all about pins and boards... so what exactly are they? Simply put, **Pins** are the content you share on Pinterest, and **Boards** are how you organise and categorise that content. Before you can start pinning anything, you need to create your boards.

### ***Creating Your Boards***

To create your first Pinterest board, go to your profile and you will see a red Create Board button. Once you click, a box will pop up with the information you need to fill in. You can enter a name for your board and a description of what your board is about (these are optional, but do not leave them blank), and select a category for it (also optional, but again do not ignore this). In addition, you can choose to keep your board secret, so that only you (and any other user(s) you choose, if any) have access to it.

At the bottom of the box, you will also see an option entitled "Collaborators," with a text box where you can invite other Pinterest users by username or email to contribute pins to the board. Adding other users to your board creates a group board, which will show up on both your profile and the other users' profiles.

Once you are done filling out your board's information, click Create and you're done. From there, you can start adding pins.

To create subsequent boards, simply go to your profile page and in the space to the left of your existing boards, you will see a rectangular grey space with a Create a Board button. From there, simply follow the same steps.

### ***Adding Pins***

You can add pins to your Pinterest boards in several different ways. To add your own content to Pinterest, go to the board you want to pin to (or use the + button from the top of the page) and click the Add a Pin button. A box will pop up with the options to add a pin from the Web or from your computer. If you decide to add a pin from the Web, Pinterest will prompt you to enter a link to the page you are wanting to pin from. Once you enter the link, you will be taken to a page that shows all the images from that website, as well as existing pins that were created by others from that website's domain. You can then select the picture you want to pin by hovering over the image and clicking the Pin it button. This will open a box that allows you to enter a description and choose a board for your pin. You can also create a new board to pin it to and choosing this option will let you name your new board and select whether you would like to add collaborators or keep the board secret. You will have to go back into this board later to edit it if you would like to add a description and choose a category. When you are done perfecting your pin, click the Create button. Pinning content from the Web will ensure that your pin links back to the website it came from. TOP TIP: This means you should create a board specifically for your blog posts to get them more attention!

If you choose to add a pin from your computer, Pinterest will prompt you to select and upload an image file. From there, the process of adding a pin is the same as above. Regardless of the way you choose to add your pins, you can always go back to specific pins later to edit their descriptions, move them to different boards or delete them altogether.

To pin from the mobile app, go to your profile tab and click the + button. This gives you the option to create a new board or pin from your phone's photos, the Web, your clipboard or to pin your location if you use the maps feature (part of Pinterest's "Rich Pins").

### **All pins must include an image or a video in order to be added to Pinterest.**

You can also "re-pin" content from other Pinterest users, in addition to adding your own content, and it is good to do a mix of both. Re-pinning is an easy way to be more active on Pinterest when you do not have your own content to share, plus it can get other Pinterest users to notice your brand. To find content to re-pin, you can browse through your home feed, look in specific categories or search certain keywords in the search bar. When you want to re-pin an existing pin, hover over the image and click the red Pin It button. You will then be prompted to select or create a board, and you can either leave the previous user's description or write your own.



## ***Rich Pins***

Rich Pins are a type of organic Pin format that provide more context about an idea by showing extra information directly on the Pin. Rich Pins are a free product available for anyone on Pinterest. You can identify Rich Pins by the extra information above and below the image on close-up, and the bold title in grid.

### *Types of Rich Pin*

Rich Pins add extra details to Pins and update important information from the websites they came from. If something changes on the original website, the Rich Pin is updated to reflect that change. There are four types of Rich Pin: product, article, app and recipe. Product Rich Pins show the most up-to-date price, availability and product information directly on your Pin. Article and Recipe Rich Pins will be updated to reflect any edits you make on your site. App Rich pins show an install button so people can download your app without leaving Pinterest.

### *Apply for Rich Pins*

- If you have product, article or recipe content on your site, mark up these pages with rich meta tags
- After adding meta tags to your web pages, validate one of your correctly marked-up content pages in the Rich Pin validator
- If the web page you are applying with is correctly marked up, an 'Apply' button will appear
- Click the button to apply for Rich Pins
- Once you apply, Pinterest will process your application within 24 hours.

When your site is enabled for Rich Pins, all content that contains correct meta tags on your site will start appearing as Rich Pins when added to Pinterest. Existing Pins that link back to pages with rich meta tags will also start appearing as Rich Pins.

## ***Interacting With Other Pinterest Users***

Pinterest is, unlike other social networks, much more focused towards sharing content than it is about interacting with other users. Having said this, it is still a social network, and as such offers users' ways to connect with other people.

- **Likes:** Liking a pin is the easiest way to interact with another Pinterest user (and to save a pin for later if you do not have time to pin it right away). Simply hover over the pin you want to like and click the heart-shaped button. Doing so will notify that user, and you can access your liked posts from the "Likes" tab on your profile page.
- **Comments:** To add comments to other users' pins, click on the pin you want to comment on, and this will pull up a larger window with the pin and more information about it, under the pin, you'll see a comment box where you can type in and share what you want to say.

- **Sending Pins:** You can also send pins you want to share with other users (or non-Pinterest users, even) by hovering over pins and clicking the send button. A box will pop up that allows you to search for other Pinterest users by username, or type in an email address to mail the pin to.
- **Tagging Users:** Just like on Twitter, you can tag users using the @ symbol on Pinterest. When you're writing a description for your pin or adding a comment to someone else's pin, just type in the @ symbol and the username of the person you want to tag, and they'll be notified.
- **Messages:** You can send private messages to other Pinterest users by clicking the Messages option in the notifications box at the top of the page. Simply select "New message," type in the user you want to talk to and hit "Next." This will open a small chat window at the bottom of your screen where you can drag and drop pins and send instant messages.

### ***Hashtags on Pinterest***

Pinterest users can use hashtags when sharing their pins, as with other social networks like Twitter, Facebook and Tumblr. However, it is worth noting that there is a lot less emphasis placed on the importance of Hashtags on Pinterest and they are really only to be seen as a bonus on Pinterest, rather than on Instagram for example where they can make or break how successful your posts are.

Pinterest has its own unique search system and hashtags are not the most effective way to make your content searchable on this social network. Hashtags on Pinterest only work in pin descriptions, so if you put them elsewhere, you will only waste your time and look like you do not know how to use the platform. Hashtags are more effective if you use your own, brand-specific hashtags, and less effective if you were to share a pin with the hashtag #recipes, for example. What is more important on Pinterest is that you use proper keywords when describing your pins and boards, keep your boards organised and categorise your boards correctly.

### ***Personalising your Pinterest Profile***

Unlike other social networks, Pinterest does not give you many profile customisations options, only allowing you to upload a profile picture, use a custom username, and write a summary about you or your business. Whilst you cannot change the layout of your Pinterest page like you can on Tumblr or upload a banner image like on Facebook or Twitter, there are other ways to make your profile unique and to stand out from the crowd

You can name your pinboards with clever phrases and keywords that are both searchable and relatable to your brand. You can also enter a short description of each board that explains what that board is about and how it aligns with your brand. Additionally, you can choose cover photos for each board that relate back to your brand and are visually stimulating. There may not be much you can customise about your Pinterest profile, but you can still successfully represent your brand with the options the platform gives you if you are clever enough and get creative.

### ***Trending Topics on Pinterest***

To see what's trending on Pinterest, open Pinterest Trends <https://trends.pinterest.com/> on your desktop or mobile browser. Select which country you want to see data from by clicking the down icon in the top-left then enter a term in the top search bar or click See now on one of the pre-populated topics featured below. As you type in the search bar, a list of suggested terms will appear. These suggestions are real searches that happen on Pinterest. They show common and trending terms relevant to the topics entered by you. Knowing what's trending on Pinterest can help you decide what types of content to pin. Any time you can relate trending topics back to your brand, you make your business more discoverable on Pinterest.

### ***Advertising on Pinterest***

Promoted Pins are a paid advertising option for businesses. Promoted Pins are just like regular Pins, only you pay for them to be placed where people are most likely to see them. In doing so, you can target specific audiences, choose to pay for either pin engagement or visits to your website, and track how your ads are performing. These Pins will surface in your desired audience's home feed, category feeds and relevant search results.

### ***Pinterest Analytics***

With Analytics, you can review the overall performance of your Pins, boards and ads. To access your account's analytics page, simply click Analytics in the top left-hand corner and select Overview. On the Overview page, you'll see your top boards and Pins from the last 30 days.

Through Pinterest analytics you can get a feel for your overall presence and see organic, paid and earned engagement for all of your Pins. You will also be shown valuable data about your audience demographics such gender, location, topics your audience is interested in, what devices visitors to your page are using, along with what your most popular pins are. All of which will help you guide your future Pinterest content and media strategy with confidence.

## **How to Set up a Pinterest Business Account**

There are three ways to create a Pinterest business account. You can add a business profile to your personal account, convert your personal account, or create a new business account. Below is how to start a business account from scratch.

- 1. Go to [pinterest.com/business/create](https://pinterest.com/business/create).**

If you have a personal account, you'll need to log out first. Enter your email and a new password, then click Create Account.

- 2. After choosing your language and location, add your business name.**

Create a short, accurate description that best fits what your business does and add a link to your website.

**3. Connect your Instagram, YouTube, and/or other accounts.**

This ensures pins from these sites will be attributed to your business. Plus, you'll also be able to track related analytics.

**4. Let Pinterest know if you plan to run ads on the platform.**

You can also choose to provide contact information for a rep to get in touch.

**5. Edit your profile.**

To get there from the business hub dashboard, click the pencil icon beside your name. You may wish to change your profile name, since it automatically pulls from the email you use. Add a profile photo (165 x 165 pixels) that represents your brand. Pinterest automatically fills your cover with creative from your pins or your boards. You can choose to populate the cover with either board or pin creative.

**6. Click Claim in the left-hand menu to claim your website.**

This will allow you to track website analytics. Also, any pins that link back to a claimed account include your profile photo and follow button. That means better visibility, and potentially more follows.

**7. Add the Pinterest Tag.**

If you plan to advertise on Pinterest, you will want to add the Pinterest Tag to your website. This will allow you to track conversions and understand what people do on your site after seeing your pins.

## Creating a Pinterest Strategy for Your Business

### *What Does my Business Want to Achieve on Pinterest?*

Whether want to use Pinterest to help launch new products or as a catalogue for your products, having clear objectives for your presence is crucial as it will dictate and influence several key areas from which types of Pinterest boards to create and how you will measure your success on Pinterest.

### **Common Pinterest Business Objectives**

- Drive Traffic to Your Site
- Strengthen Brand Identity
- Increase Your Brand Authority
- Expand Your Reach

### *Have I Built Customer Personas?*

To have an effective Pinterest plan, it is vital to understand your audience. When you know your followers, you are better able to create engaging Pinterest content that connects with them. Want to know your audience better? Just ask. Do basic research by sending out surveys to your customers. Another option is to study your followers' profiles or review Pinterest analytics. Then create user

personas based on the data. When you understand who follows you and when, you are better able to provide them with tips and tricks that speak to them. This will definitely help you stand out from the competition.

### ***What Kind of Boards Should I Create?***

Deciding on what boards you are going to create will depend on several factors, from what industry you are into what your objectives are for your page. Ultimately however, the boards that you will create will stem from a clear and strong strategy that you need to develop in the beginning, being especially clear on what you want your boards to represent about you and what you want your audience to feel when they look at your boards. In general, you could start with pins relating to your products and services and develop ideas as you go along from what inspires you to customer testimonials, product demonstrations and general pictures of your office. Just always remember to use good quality visual images and support them with quality keyword rich descriptions.

### ***What Visual Resources Do I Have That I Can I Utilise?***

Pinterest is centred on the visual and is the perfect platform for you to showcase the visual resources you have for your business. So, look to see what is relevant to share with your audience from your product and services, to eBooks, blog posts and images of staff events – the opportunities to share engaging and informative are only restricted by your own creativity.

### ***How Am I Going to Promote My Boards and Page?***

There are many ways for you to promote your page to others from utilising your other social media platforms, to ensuring you have included relevant hashtags and keywords to your pins that can help people find your images when searching Pinterest. You will also need to add Pinterest's follow button to your business website that will alert your web visitors to your Pinterest boards. Anywhere where your audience will see it is the place to alert them to your Pinterest profile, so this includes adding your URL to your e-newsletter, business card, packaging and anywhere else that is relevant for your business.

### ***How am I Going to Measure my Success?***

As with any other marketing campaign, what you are going measure in order to define your success will depend on what the initial objectives are that you have for your Pinterest presence. Whether you want to use it as an outlet to boost sales or to show others your brand identity, remember to continually look and analyse your analytics and act on what they show you.

## What Should You be Pinning?

*Pinterest helps people discover things in a simple, visual way. People are on Pinterest to share with others their interests, hobbies, tastes and passions. Therefore, as a business on Pinterest your job is to provide inspiration for these interests by making sure each of your boards tells a unique, genuine story about what interests you, what/who you are and have to offer. What types of boards you should create should also be based around your Pinterest marketing goals.*

### **Valuable Information, Tips and Advice**

Successful boards often deliver something valuable to the reader, whether that is entertainment or information. Create your boards around information that will be valuable, useful and engaging for consumers. Tips and advice are popular on Pinterest as they engage and give value to your audience and therefore makes them more likely to interact. Look to create content within your boards that can inform, teach and provide value to your audience.

### **Feedback for Your Business**

If you are thinking about launching a new service or product or looking for opinions about how a particular aspect of your business is being received, then creating a Pinterest board that acts as a virtual focus group can help you to directly connect and engage with your customers and get valuable feedback. You can find out important information about your customers likes, dislikes and preferences that can greatly help your business efforts in the future.

### **New Products or Services**

You can draw attention to a new product or service launch by dedicating a board to it. Pin information about the features and benefits, suggested audiences and uses, and special deals, testimonials, etc. After the release, you can also post customers' comments, media reviews and photos of clients using the product or service.

### **Showcase Your Company Culture and Employees**

You can also generate greater customer engagement by showing your audience an inside look at your business through boards that showcase your business style, projects, ideas, motivations and other commitments. You can also feature photos of your office and employees that will humanise your

business and make people feel like they know you. Customers are more likely to interact with a company they feel like they know, so showing a personality will draw people to your page.

### ***Showcase Your Customers***

There are many ways you can involve your customers in your content, from happy customer testimonials, pictures of customers using your product/service to a pin of a customer's own business. Maintaining good relationships with customers and continually engaging with them is a great way to encourage them to recommend you to their connections and cement yourself as a personable and genuine business with great customer service.

### ***Competitions***

If you run regular giveaways, pin those up onto a Competitions Board. Popular competitions run on Pinterest are based on people having to pin something (usually related to your product/ service) to win something. This encourages user engagement and interaction but also directs traffic to your website if they are requested to pin something directly of it.

### ***Humour***

Incorporating humour is an excellent way to engage with current and potential customers on Pinterest. When you utilize humour in your Pinterest marketing, especially funny material that speaks to your fans and followers, it grabs attention and improves clicks and engagement. Look to create a specific funny board that acts to put a humorous twist on your content.

### ***Share User-Generated Images***

Sharing real-life photos is highly effective in engaging clients and building lasting relationships. This helps your followers feel like they are part of your business, and they are more likely to engage and interact with you. Share real-life photos from your business and encourage users to do the same. Great examples to get you started with are creating a "behind the scenes" board and a user board and go from there.

### ***Showcase Product Hacks***

Pinterest is known as a place for DIY, tips and life hacks. Take advantage of this by using Pinterest as a platform to educate your audience with tips and tricks that relate to your product. This is something you can do regardless of your industry. Just make sure it is relevant. Think of some great tips to share, then create and curate the content to go with it. Your customers will appreciate this valuable and informative content and will show it through likes and repins.

### ***Repin Other Users' Content***

When marketing on Pinterest, it may seem tempting to have the lion's share of your pins be for your own products. After all, the main function of your account is to promote your brand. However, only pinning your own promotional content is a big faux pas. A top tip is to build an overall mood around your product, and one way to do that is to repin relevant content from others. For bonus points, you can team up with partners/local businesses to turn this pinning strategy into a competition for your pinners or simply run a competition of your own. A great illustration of using this strategy is by Next and their 'Style by Colour' Competition. This encouraged users to create a board that reflects their style and favourite autumnal colour, actively encouraging them to pin pins reflective of autumn and actively encouraged pinners to pin from other sites. Once done users were requested to tweet Next with the hashtag #myawcolour with the competition winner getting vouchers to spend at Next. Be sure to do this carefully however and avoid spreading content that is from an irrelevant source or a direct competitor. Rather, repin content from users with interests and quality content that complement your brand and products. This approach not only provides excellent supplementary content for your followers, but it also helps foster beneficial relationships with other users. The simple act of repinning can lead to partnerships with influential pinners.

### ***Share Videos***

Creating a board with videos is a great way to increase engagement with your Pinterest followers. Whether you post videos of behind the scenes at your company, videos of a recent speaking engagement, or video testimonials from your clients, adding video to your Pinterest boards is a great way to drive traffic to your website or YouTube channel.

### ***Highlight Relevant Infographics and Data***

Infographics often go viral on Pinterest because they provide useful information for your readers. Think about what data your target market is interested in and create your own infographics to present that data in a Pinterest-friendly way. Canva have some great templates to help you get started.

### ***Inspire With Quotes***

Whether it is a quote about success, business, hope or overcoming personal obstacles, everyone loves a good uplifting quote. Setting up an Inspiring or Motivational Quotes board is a great way to find new followers, inspire others, and drive more traffic back to your website.



# How to Build a Following and Amplify Your Impact

Pinning images is only the beginning. The next challenge is to promote your Pinterest page in order to create maximum exposure and attract attention. Rather than relying solely on search engines, there are several other key techniques you can employ to help get your content noticed.

## ***Engage with Other Pinners***

One of the key elements of building a community on any social media network is engaging with your audience. On Pinterest following other users, especially influencers, is a great way to get your content noticed and spread across a much larger network of people. By following other users and engaging with their content, you increase the chances that they will follow you back, repin, like, and comment on your images, and give you greater exposure to their large followings. Once you start to build your network, do not forget to be social and remember to continue interacting with and engaging your existing fans.

## ***Promote your Pinterest Page***

Anywhere your customers interact with your brand is an opportunity to encourage them to find you on Pinterest. Once you begin pinning, remember to promote it across all your other social media platforms and that includes mentioning it on your e-newsletter, your email signature, business card, product packaging and anywhere else your customers will see it. Adding a Pinterest "Follow" and "Pin It" Button on your website is also a great way to drive traffic to your page and encourages your customers and readers to pin your products.

## ***Create and Inspire with Interesting Boards***

The key to a successful Pinterest presence is to create and showcase a range of boards that enhance your brand, engage your audience and host a range of varied content that inspires and interests your audience. Your boards need to be a reflection of your business values and interests so be creative and remember that people can pick and choose which boards they follow, so not every board has to appeal to everyone. It is important that you also consider the overall look of the board taking care to give your board's names and descriptions ensuring they are keyword rich and clear. Choosing an eye-catching cover pin for each board is also important as you want to compel your audience to click on and see your board and you will also need to ensure that each board is filled with enough quality pins to make it feel substantial. Utilise seasons and special observances with your boards also by putting your most relevant boards at the top of your profile to coincide with the seasons and other national events.

## ***Host Competitions***

Competitions on Pinterest can help drive a lot of attention to your profile. "Pin It to Win It" competitions are very popular with businesses and if done well can really boost sales and traffic. You can generate

attention and engagement with competitions that get your fans involved by pinning images from your website onto their own boards, just make the competition interesting and gets others talking about your brand with a great prize also.

### ***Pin Your Deals and Offers***

Creating a board that houses your latest deals and offers is a great way to attract attention. If you want to utilise the community, you can create an exclusive board for Pinterest members only and encourage them to share them with other users that will potentially get your offers seen by a wider audience.

### ***Comment on Popular Pins***

Take advantage of the popular pins section of Pinterest and use this opportunity to add your thoughts and comments on popular pins to generate conversation. Always leave a thoughtful and meaningful comment and this will encourage others to check out your profile and opens up the potential for new interactions with potential new customers.

### ***Highlight Your Individual Boards***

If you have boards that are particularly popular then place them highly on your profile to promote them and gain more followers. You can also tailor your board layouts to coincide with seasons and events and promote them to gather attention.

### ***Add a Pin It Button to Your Website***

You can easily drive referral traffic from your website to Pinterest by utilising hover buttons that are effective calls to action. Install the hover Pin It button on images on your website and this will act as a visual reminder to your visitors that you have a Pinterest profile and it also makes it easy for users to pin images from your site onto their own boards.

### ***Invite Others to a Group Board***

A great way to collaborate with clients and prospects on Pinterest is to create a group board and invite others to pin onto the board. As the creator only you can moderate the board and remove inappropriate pinners and pins leaving a great canvas for others to contribute and add their pins and comments. This helps create a social and engaging group that will attract more attention to your profile.

### ***Follow and Interact With Other Businesses***

Connecting with other businesses on Pinterest is a great way to build your following and increase attention to you and your profile. Look to see if businesses you have dealt with in the past have profiles and also businesses that are similar to you in industry and location. If you follow other businesses on

their other social networking sites such as their Twitter or blog, then look to see if they are on Pinterest and connect with them also. By connecting with and interacting with other businesses you have the potential to be seen by their audiences which can open up the opportunity for potential new customers and visitors to your profile.

### ***Make it Easy for Pinners to Shop***

Pinner, as we know, like to shop. So, make it easy for them. One way to do this is with Shop the Look pins. These pins streamline the online retail process by allowing people to click on the specific item that interests them. Links take them directly to the product page so that they can buy something immediately if they wish. Pinterest also has a Shop tab for business profiles. This tab allows Pinner to shop a company's products directly from their profile.

### ***Improve On-Platform Discoverability***

#### ***- Automated Suggestions***

Pinterest's upgraded search and automated suggestions technology—known as PinSage—allows for relevant and topical organization of pins and boards. Pinner can organize existing boards based on these prompted suggestions. In addition, the technology will suggest interest-based categories for new followers and can even suggest products or services for the pinner to consider adding to their boards. These are enormously powerful tools you need to understand to take advantage of Pinterest's powerful search engine potential. Essentially it boils down to you needing to pinpoint what your ideal pinner is searching for. Once you have this information, this will help you better label everything from your pins, boards, descriptions to your profile with the right descriptive words and in a way that encourages the automated technology to start pairing your products or services with search terms.

To create get you started writing better descriptions, use Pinterest's guided search feature that will reveal Pinterest's automated suggestions. Start by typing your chosen search term in the search field. For example, a blogging business might search for the term "content marketing." You will then see other suggested terms that you can use as well. Be sure to write down these suggestions because they directly reveal what associations the technology is making with the search terms. Take them and add them to your descriptions. When you use more relevant search terms in your content, you not only make it easier for people to find your content through search but may also increase the possibility that Pinterest will suggest your product or service with its new search technology and suggestions.

When you use more relevant search terms in your content you make it easier for people to find your content through search and you also "encourage" Pinterest to suggest your product or service as you are positively exploiting its new search technology and suggestions.

- *Research Competitor Search Terms*

It is important for your strategy to look at what search terms your competitors are using, as with this data you can look for opportunities to improve the accuracy and quality of your own titles, descriptions, and images to give a more effective pinner experience for your ideal viewer. Conduct a mini audit on your competitor profile and look at areas such as How they are organizing their pins and boards? Does their content support the customer journey? Do their boards and pins reflect their strategy? What are they successfully doing with their profile that you are not?

- *Research Pinners Search Terms*

Do you understand how your ideal pinners are using the platform? Knowing this is key to creating a user experience that will ultimately help you to reach your overall goals. Make sure you understand your ideal pinners' search tendencies and user intent. Conduct research into areas such as what words they are using to search for content in the beginning of their journey versus when they are ready to buy? Also discover where in their customer journey do they move from casually browsing aspirational content to more practical or how-to content?

### ***Refine Your Boards***

Successful boards on Pinterest are often crafted by users who put great efforts in making their boards as niche as possible so that they stand a better chance of being found and subsequently followed by a target audience. Look to see if any boards that you have are labelled with a generic title that covers a broad area and actively look to refine it, seeing if you can split that broad board into several more refined ones. For example, if you have a board called 'Weddings' that contains lots of different wedding related pins look to refine it and create several different boards such as 'Wedding Dresses' 'Wedding Invites' etc. By refining your boards, you not only organise your page better, you always ensure they become more relevant to the people who are the most interested in those specific topics likely increasing your chances of getting more of the right followers.

An Optimized Pinterest Board Name is

- ✓ Eye-catching and clickable
- ✓ Keyword rich
- ✓ Industry, niche and content specific
- ✓ Jargon/ Spam word free
- ✓ Supported with the most compelling pin possible for your board cover

### ***Utilise Trends***

Ensure that you actively pay attention to relevant trends and act when you can see an opportunity that you can utilise. Things that are popular at a certain time make for a great opportunity for attracting new followers so whether it's a person or event that is trending and relates to your business jump on board

and share a pin that fits in as you will stand a good chance of gaining some of the traffic and attention that comes with a trending topic.

### ***Ensure You Tag Users***

If you are following at least one of a user's boards, you have the ability to tag them. By placing an @ symbol in front of the users' name within a pin description or comment the pin will then feature their name and also link to their profile page. Tagging other users is a great opportunity to grab their attention and encourage engagement and interaction, both of which can go a long way in attracting new followers.

### ***Ensure Every Pin is Perfectly Optimised***

One of the fundamental factors for a successful Pinterest presence is to ensure that every pin you share is optimised in 4 key areas;

***High Quality Image*** - Great pins at the very basic level need to start with a high-quality image. Look to ensure your image has no pixilation, is large, high resolution and generally good quality. It is also advisable to avoid pinning cheesy generic stock photos as Pinterest users want to be inspired with your beautiful and informative images so ensure every image you share is tailored towards providing value and is beneficial to the viewer in some way. Part of choosing a good quality image is also ensuring that your image supports the accompanying text and links and is reflective of the link you are sharing. Essentially, make sure that people know what's inside the pin, so they feel compelled to click it. If you feel that your image isn't doing so on its own, then add text to it as this can make the difference between the viewer clicking on your pin or not.

***Succinct, Snappy SEO-Rich Description*** - A pin's description is a prime example of an SEO opportunity. When trying to build your presence on Pinterest you mustn't forget and overlook this commonly neglected area as your description has a big impact on your results. Ensure that your image description is clear, concise and enticing to the viewer, all with a consideration of using key SEO-friendly words to describe the content behind the pin so your pins can successfully rank highly in search engines.

***Call-to-Action*** - Call to actions are a very powerful tool that you need to include on your pins, whether you place it on the image itself or within your pins description it is fundamental that you have included one. Whether your call to action is to encourage someone to comment, repin the image or move onto view a product on your website you need to make it clear to your followers what you want them to do so make your call to action clear and concise.

***Attribution*** - Lastly you should always consider both protecting yourself from content theft on Pinterest but also on the other hand correctly attributing others credit for their own content. It is easy to get content stolen on Pinterest, so you need to ensure you always credit the work of others that you use and also protect yourself from others who will not do the same for your content. Giving credit to others is easy and involves a simple acknowledgement to them in the pin description. In regard to protecting your original pins there are several key elements to utilise, from adding your logo or website URL in the

photo to using your key branding elements in the image design or even consider using a watermark on all of your images. Whatever elements you use ensure they are applied consistently as not only will it protect you from content theft it, having your logo or other brand elements on your pins is beneficial for your brand recognition.

### ***Ensure Your Page is Optimised***

The best way to convince visitors to follow you is to optimize your Pinterest page. Here are some key areas to focus on.

- **Profile**

For the business name, use your company name or your name if it's for your personal brand. Upload a relevant, high quality profile image, such as your company logo, a professionally taken headshot or an image with your company's name. Match your username with your business name. If the username is already taken or is too long, choose something similar to it or use an abbreviation. Take the time to write a convincing and compelling bio in the 160 characters you are given. Help attract local followers by adding your town or city and other location details. Don't forget to add your website and social media accounts. This information will be displayed right below your profile image. You can add your Facebook account only if it's a personal page as the option to add a Facebook business page isn't available yet.

- **Boards**

Make sure that your page has at least 10 boards. Place your most important or popular boards in the top row. That way they're displayed prominently above the fold, and people will see them immediately when they visit your brand page. Optimise your boards by adding good and keyword rich board names, descriptions and cover images. **Top Tip:** Create a few secret boards so you can save images to pin publicly later on.

### ***Participate in Pinterest Group Boards***

Pinterest group boards are a great collaborative tool to utilise in order to get your pins seen in front of a larger, targeted audience. Essentially a group board is where a select group of pinners pin items and collaborate towards creating a large pin board that is focused around a subject that the board's creator has chosen. You can be invited by another user to pin onto a group board which if it is a relevant theme to you, can be a great tool for getting your pins seen by a large and relevant audience. If you can't find a group that matches your interest or chosen theme then you can by all means start one of your own and then invite any pinners you follow and who also follow you to become part of the group. This is also a great way to collaborate with the community and get yourself established towards being a thought leader in your industry.

### ***Partner With Influencers and Power Pinners***

One of the best ways to advertise and promote your product is to get someone who is already established and is a well-known industry specialist with a large following to give you a helping hand.

Word of mouth marketing and getting social proof from others goes a long way towards attracting attention and brand awareness therefore actively look to find those in your industry on Pinterest who are seen as power users and look to partner with them or at the very least interact with them and comment and share their pins in the hope that they will reciprocate and pin some of your content to their own following.

### ***Design Content to Support Goals***

Before you can determine what to pin, think about your goals. They might be to drive engagement, build an audience or to drive traffic. Once you choose your goals, you can determine what to pin by reviewing your Pinterest analytics. To access this data, click the gear icon and choose Analytics from the drop-down menu. Look at your Pinterest analytics to see what content resonates with your target audience. Your analytics page has three sections: Your Pinterest Profile, Your Audience and Activity from Your Website. In the Your Pinterest Profile section, find out how your pins are performing. Your pins are categorized depending on the impressions, clicks, repins and likes they have received. Depending on your goal, choose the category you want to view. If you want to drive engagement, for example, look for pins that have been repinned and liked most. If you want to drive more traffic, look at clicks. It is also recommended that you visit the Your Audience section to look at your followers demographics and interests. Click the Interests tab to find out about their interests, the boards where most of your pins are being pinned and businesses that your audience engages with. Write down all this information and use it to brainstorm ideas about what to pin.

### ***Design Skinny Images***

A Research by Curalate found that tall images with aspect ratios between 2:3 and 4:5 get 60% more repins than very tall images. You can get photos for free from sites like Pixabay, Pexels and Unsplash or you'll find affordable illustrations and icons on sites like Creative Market. It is highly recommended however that where possible you try to create your own images. You can do this easily with free tools like PicMonkey and Canva.

### ***Test Various Pin Times***

The best times to pin, according to Social Marketing Writing is from 2 pm to 4 pm and 8 pm to 1 am with the best day to pin being Saturday. This is only a general guideline however and you may come to find your optimal posting times are different. The important thing is to test various pin times to work out what is most effective for your business. To save you time, there are many online tools you can use to schedule pins. Use Viraltag, for example, to simplify the process of creating and importing images; it integrates with Canva, Flickr, Facebook, Picasa and Instagram. The tool's Image Enhancer makes it easy to edit your images. When you're scheduling pins, use a combination of your content and content from others. Where possible, include the handle of the creator of the image or content in your description.

### ***Always Serve Complementary Content***

Followers look to you and your business for be informed with valuable content. Show you know your industry and develop powerful relationships with loyal clients by providing your audience with Pinterest boards filled with helpful and engaging content. Always seek to know what your clients want and need and create and serve them complementary content that helps them view you as a trusted resource.

### ***Create Multiple Boards***

A way to strengthen your brand presence is to vary the types of boards you create. Create multiple boards to give your followers a variety of topics covering a huge selection of relevant content. That way, you speak to multiple facets of your audience thereby increasing your appeal and reach. Remember when pinning to only include content that remains relevant to and strengthens your brand. More boards and topics will lead to an increase in followers.

### ***Experiment With Promoted Pins***

Promoted pins offer the option to pay for additional exposure for your content. As with all advertising, its best practise to experiment with different options. Test different images, copy and even categories, and then choose the ones that work best for you.

### ***Collaborate With Popular Pinners***

Group boards allow you to invite contributors to add their own pins to a common board. When contributors are chosen carefully, these group boards greatly benefit marketers by leveraging the contributors' influence and following. In the end it all boils down to an understanding that to be successful on Pinterest you need to create and foster a genuine and involved community and recognise the power of collaboration by inviting others into the conversation.

### ***Design a Recognisable Style***

The average Pinterest user follows nine brands, which means not only are you competing with individuals for attention, but you are also competing with other companies. Even once someone follows you, there is no guarantee they will notice your pins. One way to set your pins apart from the rest is to develop a recognisable style. Your signature style can be as bold as adding your logo or other identifying mark to all your pins, or as subtle as sticking to certain aesthetic markers like lighting, angles or typography. All these considerations work towards one central aim: to make it easy for users to recognise your pins as they scroll through their feeds.



### ***Optimise Pins for Mobile Devices***

According to the latest usage data from Pinterest, 75% of all users access the platform from a mobile device. That means it is absolutely necessary to optimize your images for mobile and any deficiency in your images is going to cost you dearly. To optimize your images for mobile devices, make sure they are large enough to view on a small screen. This is particularly important for images that include text. The most effective way to know whether your post is a fit for mobile is to simply preview all your images on a smartphone and see how they look before you post them.

## **Tips for Success**

### ***Add Your Logo/Website to Your Images***

When pinning original content, consider adding a watermark of your website or logo to your image this is to preserve pin integrity and ensure that the image will always stay connected to your website and will continue to promote your brand.

### ***Verify your Account***

When you create a business account make sure to have it verified. This can add authority and trust to a profile and can also make it stand out from other profiles within a search.

### ***Engaging Board Cover Photos***

One of the important things to consider when you begin creating boards is to select an engaging cover photo for each board. When a visitor lands on your Pinterest profile, you want the content to stand out and you can do this very easily by carefully selecting the cover photo for each board.

### ***Make your Website Pinterest Friendly***

To motivate your customers to share your content you need to optimise your business website to make it easy and compelling for them to do so. The Pinterest Goodies page found on Pinterest plays host to several widgets that you can download and utilise on your website to make pinning your products and following your profile simple for fans to do. From a follow us widget, to a Pin it widget and even a widget that's lets you showcase a specific board or your pins right inside on your site. Whatever widgets you choose to use, ensure you clearly display them on your site so that you can help turn your website traffic into potential new followers for your Pinterest profile.

### ***Pin Consistently***

Pinning consistently will come naturally if you have a well-developed pinning strategy. Consistently with your pinning goes a long way towards helping people discover your pins and increasing the number of followers you gain. As a basis look to pin/repin at least 5 – 10 images daily and stick to that routine, don't pin aggressively for several days straight and then neglect your profile for a week as this will not keep you in followers home pages which will not help you grow your following.

### ***Pin at Optimal and Different Times of the Day***

There are users all over the world on Pinterest all pinning and viewing at different times throughout the day. Therefore, to help you potentially get seen by a new and global audience you should look to use response data to determine the best times to pin on your boards.

### ***Convert Your Pinterest Personal Page to a Business Page***

Although there's no visual difference in a personal and business page, if you are using Pinterest as your business you should convert to using a business page as this allows you to access certain features such as analytics that personal pages don't which is key to measuring your business success on Pinterest.

### ***Bias Business Specific Boards and Not Get Carried Away With Casual***

It is very easy, especially without a clear strategy, to get carried away with the casual aspect of Pinterest and eventually lose sight of the opportunity to create boards that are representative of your business. So just remember to be clear you're your strategy and stick to creating boards that both interest your audience and are representative or related to your business and industry.

### ***Utilise Your Brand Assets and Create a Board For Them***

Whilst some industries are more visual than others, there is a need nowadays for all industries to embrace the visual and utilise the many business resources that can be easily repurposed for use on Pinterest. From brand videos, to corporate literature such as white papers, e-books and photos of corporate events there may be a lot more assets available to you than you realise that together will make a strong Pinterest board collection.

### ***Use Keywords Strategically***

By strategically using keywords across your profile, you are helping to make you profile more discoverable via search and therefore open to traffic and new interactions. Take the time to optimise all aspects of your profile with strategically place keywords from your business description, board name to your description for Pinterest search and you will get higher placement in results.

### ***Share Different Types of Content***

Many have the perception that Pinterest only allows the use of images and therefore one of the greatest features and one of the most underutilised by many Pinterest users is posting varying types of content. From audio from Sound Cloud to videos from YouTube and slideshows from SlideShare Pinterest allows users to share a whole range of rich and varied content so utilise this feature and help your business stand out from the crowd.

### ***Vary Your Board Positions with the Seasons & Special Observances***

As national observances are celebrated and seasons change so too must your boards and their positions. These special events are a great time for your business to place your seasonal boards at the top of your profile to attract more attention and followers. As you plan new Pinterest boards, look for widely celebrated events and plan your board display accordingly placing an emphasis on encouraging interaction from your audience that will drive traffic at these crucial times of year for sales.

### ***Don't Neglect Your Business Description***

You have up to 200 characters to describe your business in the about section and it is important to craft them wisely. Have your keywords in mind and make it easy to read with a clear, interesting and relevant description to take advantage of SEO on Pinterest.

### ***Optimise Your Page for SEO***

As with any other social media platform you need to consider your SEO efforts when marketing on Pinterest. There are many ways to optimise your page for SEO including, optimising your about section and pin descriptions with descriptive keywords, including links back to your website and ensuring the images you pin have descriptive file names and relevant hashtags you can also include a reference link back to your website to drive traffic.

### ***Stay Informed of Pinterest's Business News***

As Pinterest evolves it is likely to make important changes that you as a business need to be aware of. Remember to follow the official Pinterest business page and subscribe to their blog to make sure you stay on top of Pinterest's business updates.

### ***Take Note of Your Pinterest Followers***

It is important for you to look at your Pinterest followers to find out important information such as who is looking, commenting and sharing your pins. Finding out this information can help you gain vital feedback about when your followers repin, the comments you gain and if you see the same people frequently repinning and interacting with you it shows you your potential brand ambassadors.

Additionally, the information about who is interacting with you can also shed light on important potential opportunities to engage with individuals and businesses that may not have been an intended target in your Pinterest strategy.

### ***Keep Your Pinterest Boards Fresh***

Updating your followers Pinterest feed with fresh content regularly is key to a successful presence. Pinterest users love fresh content as it is something new and they get a first look especially before it becomes spread across Pinterest. From this you should actively look to pin original content from a variety of sites and sources as this will attract attention from other users and gives them a reason to follow your boards as they know you will provide them with regular, fresh and interesting content.

### ***Keep Your Boards Organised***

Organised boards are fundamental for not only your own general ease of use of Pinterest but also go a long way in gathering followers. Your organisational skills need to be applied to everything from your board names, what boards you generate, how many boards you generate, to ensuring your pins are always placed in the appropriately named board. In addition, you will also need to ensure each board cover has the best pin and that your boards are arranged in an order that best represents you or your brand. Whilst it may seem a lot of effort, you will be rewarded greatly in the long term as organising your boards keeps them user-friendly, easily searchable for your audience and will ensure your Pinterest presence is as fully optimised as it can be for attracting followers and building your brand awareness positively.

### ***Include Price Tags***

Users on Pinterest are not only there for creative inspiration but are also there to find new things to buy. Whilst it is great to have a profile filled with value and inspiration, you as a business and marketer are ultimately on Pinterest to drive traffic to your website and inspire purchases by others. Therefore, it is up to you on your profile to influence and compel buyer behaviour and one of the most important ways to drive traffic and increase revenue is to include a price tag and information on the pins that you create as research has found Pinterest pins with prices get 36 percent more likes than those without. It is important to remember however that your Pinterest profile isn't simple seen as purely a sales driven platform where you simply broadcast your products, rather you need to provide value to your community with a mix of rich, quality pins that inspire, inform and excite your audience.

### ***Create a Board for Your Blog***

Cross promoting your content across your social media platforms is a vital task that you can utilise to increase your brand awareness and drive traffic to your sites. If you have a blog, ensure that you create a board on your Pinterest profile that is solely a place for your followers to find all your blog posts and place it in a prominent position. You also need to consider your SEO efforts by naming your boards and

pins using relevant keywords, making it easier for followers to find them in search engine results. On every new blog post you publish, you then need to add it to your blog board on Pinterest and look to include a clear, concise and key word rich summary of the article, a relevant high-quality image (ideally not a generic stock photo) and a link back to the blog post itself.

### ***Think of Pinterest as a Search Engine***

Despite Pinterest being a visual platform, text plays an especially important role and as such, you need to approach Pinterest in the mind set of it being a visual search engine. From your board's names to pin descriptions and what you name your image files, you need to consider your keyword research and strategically place those words throughout your pins and profile to ensure you attract your target audience and increase your visibility in Pinterest search results.

### ***Regularly Explore your Analytics***

Pinterest Analytics shows you a wealth of important data that you can and should regularly analyse. From your pin impressions, the quantity of repins to clicks, what content resonates best with your audience and much more, you should regularly keep track of what your analytics tell you as it will help you make informed choices for future content creation and distribution. A monthly check of your analytics is enough to show you a wealth of important information that will inform and help you adapt your Pinterest strategy to ensure it is as effective as it can be moving forward.

### ***Optimise for Mobile***

With ever increasing numbers of people accessing Pinterest from their mobile devices, it is vital that you optimise your profile for mobile users and give them a mobile friendly experience. Therefore, you should test and experiment with your images to see how they look on both your desktop and a variety of other mobile devices to ensure you provide a seamless experience for those visiting your Pinterest page no matter what device they are viewing it from. When assessing your site from different devices, you should check for several key areas such as are your images pinnable? Are the social media sharing buttons clearly positioned and working properly? If text is used, it is readable on a small screen? And importantly, do the images appear on the mobile version of your website? The time you spend too perfect your profile from your desktop should also be spent on making your site work for mobile too, if you fail to do so then you could lose not your pins but crucially, traffic and sales also.

### ***Like Other People's Pins***

If you come across pins that you like but are not necessarily useful to your audience or be something that you want to pin to one of your boards, you may want to consider liking them rather than repining them. Anytime you like someone's pin, it will show up in their activity feed. This may grab their attention and get them to follow you.

### ***Use Keywords For Search Results***

Hashtags are no longer necessary on Pinterest as the search functionality looks for keywords in pin descriptions. When writing your pin descriptions, make sure you are using the keywords most people would use to find your content. For example, if you want to be found under the keyword 'Golf', you will obviously use the word "Golf" somewhere in your description. This makes it easier to be found and will create more followers leading to more exposure.

### ***Use Pinterest's Browser Extensions for Easier Pinning***

Pinterest offers browser extensions for Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer and Safari. Downloading the extension gives you a pin it button right in your browser's toolbar. This is a great way to seamlessly pin interesting things you see whilst surfing the Internet. Once you the extension is installed, you will be able to simply right click, choose Pin this Image from the drop down and be able to choose the board that you want to pin it to. Not only will it pin the graphic, but it will link back to the originating source.

### ***Pin Videos***

Pinterest does not just allow you to pin images...you can also pin videos! Pinterest allows you to pin videos from sites like Dailymotion, TED, YouTube and Vimeo. To pin a video, you have to make sure you have the 'share' URL of the video; not the URL where you watched the video, or the embed code. On YouTube, for instance, you will find this link under the video under 'Share'.

### ***Use Pinterest's Mobile App***

It is recommended you download Pinterest's mobile app. It will allow you to easily browse, pin, repin and even take photos to pin right from your phone which is perfect for growing your page and interacting on the go.

### ***Repin for a Few Minutes Each Day***

To get noticed on Pinterest, you need to pin and repin regularly. Even taking around three minutes each day to curate and repin to your Pinterest boards can have a profound effect on your profile. To find relevant content to repin simply enter keywords for your niche or industry in Pinterest search. Remember to check the links on any pins to make sure they are active and relevant before you share them.

### ***Follow Relevant Pinners***

For successful Pinterest marketing, you must actively follow pinners in your niche. Find pinners relevant to your niche through a Pinterest search and look to follow three to five new pinners every day, being

careful not to follow just anyone. Once you find potential pinners to follow, review their profiles and check their Pinterest activities to see if they will add value to your Pinterest marketing.

### ***Comment on a Pin a Day***

Keep your eyes open for relevant pins on which you can offer input. If a pin inspires you, add something to the conversation, aiming for at least one comment at least a day. Your comments can be as short or as long as you'd like, just make sure it is relevant, pertinent and not self-promotional.

### ***Create Pinterest Images in Batches***

Save yourself a lot of time by getting a good image creation tool such as Canva and creating images of your own to pin to your Pinterest boards. A pro tip is to do this task all in one sitting. If you aim to create a fresh image to pin each weekday, that means 7 images a week. One image should take about 5 minutes minimum, so this should only take around 35-minutes. The Ideal size for a pin is 1000 x 1500 pixels, however on Canva you can choose the default Pinterest graphics layout that is already optimised for size so all you need to do is focus on creating your design.

### ***Follow Analytics to Generate Content Ideas***

To find inspiration for original pins, review Pinterest Analytics each week. Evaluate your repin, impression and click progress over a period of time, as well as individual pin performance. Jot down the best pins and boards and this will help you understand which boards and images are getting the most attention from your followers. Then apply what you have learned when you create pins for the next week.

## **Common Mistakes to Avoid**

### ***Not Strategically Placing Your Boards***

Newly created pinboards fall into place after those you created first. As time passes, the boards you most want your followers to see may be lowest on the page. To avoid making this mistake you need to edit your profile so that your most important boards are in the top row of pinboards. Additionally, you should adjust your boards to coincide with seasons and other national observances placing those most likely to get attention at the top of your page.

### ***Using Bad Quality Images***

Images and videos are central to Pinterest so it's vital to represent your brand with good, high quality photos. Low quality photos aren't just visually bad quality they are also ones that are bland and uninspiring so to ensure you are successful on Pinterest you need to evoke a response from your audience with images that make an impact and inspire people to learn more about you.

### ***Pinning Only Your Products or Services***

Rather than using Pinterest as a blatant sales tool by only pinning your products and services, you need to embrace the social aspect of Pinterest and engage with your audience. Pins that illicit an emotional response with your consumer and inform, inspire and entertain are going to be the ones that get repinned, so focus on giving your audience what they want as opposed to old-fashioned pushy sales tactics.

### ***Not Completing Your Pinterest Business Profile***

As with any other social media platform it is important to make sure you complete your profile. A well-presented business Pinterest account will make your business look more professional and credible, so ensure you complete all the sections in the business profile, including links to your other websites, a good quality brand logo so you are easily identified and a clear about section that contains your detailed business information and represents your business effectively.

### ***Not Including Prices on Your Images***

It is widely known that Pinterest pins with prices get more likes than pins without them. So, remember to either include the price in your description on every product pin you post or incorporate the price in the image you pin.

### ***Not Linking Your Pins to Product Pages***

A Pinterest user does not have to visit your Pinterest homepage to engage with your posts, they simply can just repin from others, so it is vital that you link your product pins back to a product landing page to ensure you do not miss on a good marketing opportunity.

### ***Not Including a Description on Your Images***

If you fail to include descriptions on your pins, they will not show up in a Pinterest search which makes you less discoverable. So, ensure that every time you utilise the pin description and create a well-written and clear description of your product with strategically placed keywords and relevant hashtags. You can write up to 500 characters within a pin description so make the most of this and craft a description that



effectively tells the viewers about your product and where appropriate, link back to your website, other social networks or your blog to drive traffic to your business.

### ***Not Using Pinterest Analytics***

If you fail to explore your analytics you miss out on the chance to learn important information that can affect your Pinterest marketing strategy. Analytics are there to help you make your boards more effective so regularly analyse your analytics and respond accordingly to what the information is showing you.

### ***Neglecting or Abandoning Your Pinterest Profile***

Having a neglected profile that is no longer updated is harmful to your social and business reputation. If you find you no longer use your profile you need to go back to basics and look at your marketing strategy to understand what went wrong and what you are going to do to ensure Pinterest becomes an effective tool in your marketing strategy. If you still struggle you need to evaluate whether Pinterest itself is actually a profile your business needs to have a presence on at all.

### ***Not Engaging With The Community***

The nature of Pinterest is based on social collaboration and you need to utilise the social aspect of Pinterest by monitoring, listening and responding to what your fans are saying and doing. Actively look to connect and interact with those who follow you and other businesses similar to you as being social goes a long way towards establishing your reputation as a credible and genuine business as well as making others more likely to interact with you and tell others they know about you too which has the potential for new business opportunities.

### ***Pinning or Repinning Inappropriate Items***

Your Pinterest page is an extension of your business persona so don't harm your reputation by pinning or repinning images and other items that are inappropriate and not representative of your business.

### ***Not Choosing a Category for Each of Your Boards***

For each new board you create, you can and should choose a category to place it into. By placing your board into an appropriate category, you will make your content more searchable by others.

### ***Not Having a Pinning Strategy***

Without a pinning strategy it's easy to visit your profile every so often and repin anything that catches your eye leading to boards that are filled with random images and doesn't really enhance or represent

what your business is trying to convey on Pinterest. The key is to remember that as a brand you are trying to show others what your business is all about so strategically plan out your boards and have in mind what message you want the audience to get when they look at each of your boards.

### ***Not Promoting Your Business Pinterest Page***

No one will know your Pinterest profile exists if you fail to promote it. So, utilise the networks and resources you already such as your other social networks, your website and word of mouth to help spread the word.

## **Measuring Success**

Accessing your Pinterest analytics will show you a whole host of important information. You will be able to see what people like from your profile, what they save from your website and data about your audience, too, so you can learn what your customers really want. With Pinterest Analytics, you can learn;

- What Pins and boards from your profile people love most
- What people like to save from your website
- Who your Pinterest audience is, including their gender, location and other interests
- What devices people use when they're Pinning your stuff
- How adding the Pin It button to your website leads to referral traffic from Pinterest

### ***Pins From Your Website***

One of the most important metrics to consider is the number of pins created from your websites content. By analysing this metric, you can help determine the important factor of whether the visual content on your website is interesting enough for your website visitors to pin to your boards. By looking at this metric over time you can also assess what visual content is most engaging for your audience and similarly show you areas where your content isn't attracting attention therefore highlighting what content you should show in the future to engage your audience and encourage more pins.

### ***Number of Visitors and Visits to Your Website***

A big indicator as to the success of your Pinterest presence is the level at which your audience on Pinterest was driven to your website. When looking at this metric you should also look to see the number of new visitors as this will help you determine whether you are successfully expanding your reach into new audiences and therefore potential new customers. Looking at the level of returning visitors via Pinterest is also worthwhile as it shows you whether you are continually attracting and engaging previous visitors successfully enough that they have want to and are given a reason to return to your website.

### ***Most Repinned Content***

The most repinned metric is fundamental in understanding what content is being repinned the most, therefore showing your business what content is resonating best with your audience. Reviewing the pins that get repinned the most helps you identify the key aspects of the type of content that works for your Pinterest audience which will better inform your future content creation efforts to ensure future pinning success and effectiveness.

### ***Most Clicked Content***

Understanding what content on Pinterest drives the most traffic to your website is highly important as it will show you essentially what content compels people to visit your website, giving you more understanding of the potential to generate revenue. Ensure you explore which pins drive the most traffic to your website and use this information in your future content creation. Analysing this metric can also show you whether the Pin it button on your website is driving engagement as if the same content that has a pin it button appears in the most clicked report then you know the pin it button is a successful aspect of your Pinterest marketing as it is helping to drive engagement on Pinterest which could translate into potential revenue for your website.

## **Pinterest Maintenance Checklist**

### ***DAILY***

- ✓ Go through Pinterest home page and pin any relevant images to boards
- ✓ Using the search bar type in keywords, relevant words and words associated with your boards to find more images and try to pin at least 1 new image to each of your boards
- ✓ See who has followed you and respond accordingly

### ***WEEKLY***

- ✓ Think of any ideas for new boards you can create. Think of boards your target audience/current clients etc. would like to see.
- ✓ Go through boards and make sure everything is organised
- ✓ Look to see if any new connections from other social media platforms have Pinterest and follow them
- ✓ Create batches of original images for use within the week

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# INSTAGRAM

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At its most basic, Instagram is a social networking app made for sharing photos and videos from a smartphone. From a marketing perspective, Instagram makes a strong business case with over a billion users. When compared among the major social networks, only Facebook and YouTube have more people logging in each month. Instagram provides a huge asset for visual content, which we all know is driving social like none other and has developed itself into a fully-fledged, global platform that allows brands to humanize their content, showcase their products, inspire their audience and promote their brand all in a friendly, authentic way without directly selling to your customers.

## What's Good about Instagram?

- One of the best attributes about Instagram is that it greatly accomplishes its original goal: **fast, easy, and efficient photo-sharing**. Not only this but photos shared via Instagram are reaching a huge audience, thanks to steady user adoption. People engage better with visuals rather than words. It's widely known that photos rule when it comes to marketing as photos make an emotional connection in a way that text cannot. They make your company and brand more relatable and of course, are fun and engaging.
- **No Character And Caption Limit.** While there are some limits when it comes to the bio and username, unlike some social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram does not have a character limit when it comes to the image caption. The description of every post can be as long as you want it to be.

## What's not so good about Instagram?

- Since Instagram is a visual tool, you need to have appealing content to share to stand any chance of success on this platform.
- Instagram is a service that is designed to be used with mobile devices, such as tablet computers or smart phones. It has limited functionality on desktop computers.

## Need to Know Facts, Stats and Tips about Instagram

- The number of monthly active Instagram users has grown to 1 billion
- Instagram continues to attract a younger audience with 72% of teens saying that they use the platform.
- Even in terms of engagement, Instagram is ahead of Facebook with a median engagement rate of 1.73% per post for brands.
- But among marketers, Instagram still takes second place to Facebook with 83% of them using the platform.
- Users upload more than 100 million photos and videos on a daily basis.

- 2 billion Likes occur on the platform every day.
- Thursday is the best day to post on Instagram for brands across all verticals.
- Instagram Profiles saw a follower growth rate of 17-33% during 2018.
- Videos get 21.2% more interactions compared to images and 18.6% more interactions compared to carousels.
- Instagram Stories Daily Active Users: 300 million
- Number of Businesses on Instagram: 25 million
- Number of Instagram Likes per day: 4.2 billion
- Number of Photos uploaded per day: 95 million, up from 70 million last year
- 68% of Instagram users are Females.
- More than 40 Billion photos have been uploaded to Instagram so far.
- 200 million Instagrammers actively visit the profile of a business every day
- Posts with at least one hashtag average 12.6% more engagement.
- More than 400 million accounts now use Instagram Stories every day, according to Instagram.

## Why You Need Instagram For Your Business

From the boom in popularity of Instagram Stories, to the very impressive stats of user adoption engagement and the recent expansion of advertising opportunities—it is a good time to be using Instagram for business. Only if your business can thrive in this creative and inherently visual platform though.

## How to Create an Instagram Business Account and the Basic Lingo

With an Instagram business profile, businesses can promote their products and services to a global audience of people who are most interested in what they do. Instagram business accounts have features and settings that can help your business reach more people, stay connected with them and boost sales.

### ▪ **Download the Instagram App**

The very first thing you need to do is to download the Instagram App which is available for free in both the Apple App Store and Google Play. At Current, Instagram does not have a desktop version that includes all the functions of the mobile app.

### ▪ **Create an Instagram Account**

Once downloaded, it is time to create your account. When you open the app, you will have two choices - Log In With Facebook or Sign Up With Phone or Email. Whilst it is tempting to use the Facebook option, from a business perspective you need to sign up with a business email to ensure your profile is not linked with your personal Facebook account. Next, enter your details. Your Full Name is the name that will be displayed on your profile so be sure to enter your actual business name, so your profile is recognizable to visitors.

- **Pick a Username**

You will then be prompted to choose a username. In a similar way to Twitter, your username is unique to your profile and allows other accounts to find, connect and engage with your brand. Pick a username that is recognizable, easy to find and -subject to availability- it would ideally be your exact business name. Should your business name already be taken by another user, try to create a username that is as close as possible. You can update your username later in your account settings, so do not worry if you want to change it in the future.

- **Choosing the Right Profile Photo**

Your profile picture is one of the first things people see when searching for and visiting your profile so keep your image in line with your logo, branding or visual elements. Be aware that Instagram displays your profile photo in a circle format and will automatically crop your photo to fit inside the circle so be aware of this and leave room around the corners of your image.

- **Your Instagram Bio**

Instagram bios have a 150-character maximum, so you will need to be direct and concise in telling the audience who you are and what you do. Your bio is the only place where you can feature a clickable URL and drive traffic to an external site, so you need to take advantage of this. It is common practice for businesses to use this to showcase their website, feature their most recent post, or a landing page for a competition. Do not worry about trying to stuff keywords and hashtags into your description as they aren't searchable on your bio. You can edit your profile photo, profile name, username, bio, or URL. at any time by clicking on the "Edit Profile" button on your profile.

- **Managing Your Settings**

In the upper right-hand corner of your profile if you click on the small gear (dots if you are using an Android) icon this will take you to your settings. There you will be able to manage all your profile settings such as changing your password, see posts you've liked, enable notifications, and much more. To boost engagement, there are a few settings you should check out right away:

**Comments:** Having people engage with your content is great but sometimes you may come across certain comments that are negative, offend your audience or go against your brand values. Instagram can automatically hide comments that contain certain keywords or phrases (for example expletives) To do this, you must turn on the feature and enter your chosen specific words and phrases into your Instagram settings.

**Switch to Business Profile:** Business profiles make it easy for your audience to contact you, provides more in-depth insights and makes it easier for you to promote content. Importantly, to switch to an Instagram business profile your business must have a Facebook business page and you must be a Facebook page admin to connect the two platforms. To switch to a business profile, view your profile, and click on the gear icon in the upper right-hand corner to view your settings. Scroll down and click on "Switch to Business Profile." Log in with Facebook and allow Instagram to manage your Pages. Select a Facebook Page to connect with your Instagram

profile. Instagram will automatically import relevant information from your Facebook page for you to edit.

**Private Account:** Instagram will automatically set your profile to public and you should keep it this way! If you are a business, you need users to be able to automatically see your posts and follow your business without any obstacles.

**Story Settings:** You can manage who can see and reply to your Instagram Stories in your "Story Settings." You should allow all your followers to see and reply to your Stories to increase brand engagement and awareness.

**Adding Additional Instagram Accounts:** If you manage multiple accounts you can add up to five accounts, so you are able to quickly switch between them without logging in and out. To add an account, click on the gear to reveal your settings. Scroll to the bottom and click "Add Account." Enter the username and password of the account you would like to add. To switch between accounts, go to your profile and tap your username at the top of the screen. Simply click on the account you would like to switch to.

## The Basic Content

Instagram allows users to post photos and videos to their Instagram feed as well as Instagram "stories" and live videos. People come to Instagram to be inspired and discover things they care about, which includes content from brands and businesses.

### How to Add a Photo

To post a new photo, tap the add (camera) button on the bottom of your screen. This will open your phone's camera, and you can choose either to take a new photo or video or select one from your camera roll. Click Next, and you will be taken to a screen with multiple options, including Instagram's filters and an Edit button, which will allow you to adjust the photo by changing the brightness, contrast, structure, warmth, saturation, colour, fade, highlights and shadows. You can also add a vignette or tilt-shift the picture. Once you have edited the photo, click Next. This gives you two options: You can post the photo to your public feed or send it directly to a friend/friends. If you choose to make it public, write a caption to describe the picture, add a location to geotag it, add several relevant hashtags, tag people and share it on multiple platforms. You have the option to turn off comments, found at the bottom of the Advanced Settings page. If you choose to send the picture directly to someone else, simply compose a caption and send it to one or several friends. If you want to change or add something after you have published a post, tap the ellipses (...) button on that post and select Edit to update the caption or add a location or tags. Here you can also share the post on other social networks or delete the post entirely.

### Instagram Stories

Instagram Stories are pieces of content that disappear after 24 hours. At the top of your home page is a horizontal bar that has your profile photo with a plus sign. When you select the photo of yourself, it opens another screen, with the option of live video, an option called Normal (which takes a photo),

Boomerang (which creates a GIF) and Hands-Free, which records a video without requiring you to hold down the record button. You also have the option to draw on the photo or video with the pen icon on the top right, add stickers with the sticky-note icon, or add text with the "Aa" icon. To add more content to your story, click the camera icon located on the top left.

## Instagram Video

On Instagram users can either share a video that remains on the profile or take and stream a live video that disappears. If you're looking to take video that remains on your Instagram feed, you can upload video you've taken or take video directly through the app to post. If you choose to take or upload video, you can still add filters and change the cover. You also have the option of whether to include sound. The Live Video option offers you the benefit of giving customers content in a fun and different way such as a live look behind the scenes of interesting aspects of your business or a live Q&A through the comments. Once the live video has ended, it is no longer available anywhere, which sets it apart from Facebook.

## Instagram Reels

Instagram's version of TikTok, Reels, invited you to create 15 to 30-second clips set to music. Record and edit 15-second multi-clip videos with audio, effects, and new creative tools. You can share reels with your followers on Feed, and, if you have a public account, make them available to the wider Instagram community through a new space in Explore.

To create a Reel, open the App and Select Reels at the bottom of the Instagram camera. You will then see several creative editing tools on the left side of your screen to help create your reel, including:

- **Audio:** Search for a song from the Instagram music library. You can also use your own original audio by simply recording a reel with it. When you share a reel with original audio, your audio will be attributed to you and people can create reels with your audio.
- **AR Effects:** Select one of the many effects in the effect gallery.
- **Timer and Countdown:** Set the timer to record any of your clips hands-free. Once you press record, you will see a 3-2-1 countdown, before recording begins for the amount of time you selected.
- **Align:** Line up objects from your previous clip before recording your next to help create seamless transitions.
- **Speed:** Choose to speed up or slow down part of the video or audio you selected. This can help be helpful to make slow motion videos or stay on a beat.

Reels can be recorded in a series of clips (one at a time), all at once, or using video uploads from your gallery. Record the first clip by pressing and holding the capture button. You will see a progress indicator at the top of the screen as you record. Stop recording to end each clip.

## Instagram Live

Instagram Live is a feature that allows you to engage your audience in a real time "live broadcast" format. This is an especially helpful feature for if you are attending an event or discussing anything timely or urgent. Your Instagram Live story will show up first in your followers' Story feed, and they'll



also get a notification that it's happening when they open the app. Only use this feature if you have some truly good content to share, or you might push users away for wasting their time.

## Instagram TV

While each Story can only be 15 seconds long, Instagram TV was made especially for long-form videos. These can be 10 minutes, or up to an hour for accounts with more followers. Instagram TV allows users to search for videos that interest them, and also makes recommendations based on their past behaviour and activity. If you're just starting out, Instagram TV may not necessarily suit your needs or goals. But if you're a media company, or produce long videos naturally in your business, then it can be a useful tool for engaging your audience.

## Interacting with Other Instagram Users

There are many ways to interact with other users on Instagram. For instance, you can tag other users in your photos, comment on content or privately message people.

- **Liking:** Liking is the basic way to connect with other users. To like a photo, either double tap the image or tap the heart button under the post. To view a list of photos you've liked, go to your profile, press the gear button on the top-right corner and select Posts You've Liked.
- **Commenting:** Next to the Like button is a Comment button — just tap it and the app will take you to the Comments page for that photo, with a text box where you can enter what you want to say. Just press Send when you finish typing.
- **Mentioning:** As on Twitter, you can use the @ symbol to tag other users in your Instagram comments or post captions. When you type the @ symbol, followed by the first letter of a person's username, it will bring up a list of people to select from; or, you can simply finish typing out the person's username on your own. If you want to reply to another user's comment, you need to tag the person this way, or else that user won't get a notification.
- **Tagging:** Instagram allows you to add tags before you post an image or video. To do so, tap the Tag People option before sharing your photo, and then tap where in the photo you'd like to add a tag. The app will then prompt you to type in the person's name to search for his or her account. Once you've tagged other users in your photo and shared the image, other users can tap on the photo to see the people who are tagged.
- **Direct messaging:** To access Instagram Direct, go to the home page and tap the button in the top-right corner. Here, you can send private instant messages, photos and videos to other users. To send a new direct message (DM), tap the "+" button in the top-right corner, and select Send Photo or Video, or Send Message. Once you've sent the message, you and the recipients can message back and forth. Users who are not already following you will be asked whether they want to allow you to send them photos and videos before they can view your direct message.

# How to Create an Instagram Marketing Strategy

Many businesses feel pressured to be on every social media platform without thinking through their strategy, especially when it is the new exciting platform that all the millennials are using! However, since Instagram is quite different from other popular social sites it requires a different marketing strategy.

## Determine Your Objectives

First things first, you need to lay the foundation and establish what you want to achieve on Instagram. Whether you have never published a single photo or you're an Instagram pro, it's important to start with clear goals in mind. Consider the following the questions to help build a solid foundation to your Instagram marketing strategy:

- Why are you using Instagram?
- How can Instagram assist you in achieving your overall marketing goals?
- How does Instagram offer you something different to other platforms?
- Who is your target audience and which members of your audience are active on Instagram?
- How will Instagram integrate with the other networks in your social media strategy?
- How much time or budget can you commit to Instagram?

Depending on your industry, brand and key performance indicators, your Instagram marketing strategy should ideally target several objectives. Here are some common ones that businesses tend to choose:

- Increased brand awareness
- Showcase your team and recruit new talent
- Increase customer engagement and brand loyalty
- Showcase products and services
- Share company and industry news/updates
- Connect with influencers
- Drive sales through traffic
- Showcase your company culture and values
- Advertise to potential customers

As you continue to create your strategy, these objectives will guide you in determining the best approach to each part of the process.

## Determine Your Instagram Audience

Marketing is all about delivering the right message, to the right people, at the right time. Just like on any other social media platform, you need to determine the audience you want to reach before you begin marketing on Instagram. Do not know where to start? Some helpful factors to consider when narrowing down your target Instagram audience are age, location, gender, income, interests, motivations, and pain points. If you already have other marketing strategies in place, you can draw from those to help. Some other tips include, looking at your competitor's followers and monitoring popular event and interest hashtags that are related to your business then find out who's using and engaging with the hashtags and check out their profiles.

## Competitive Analysis for Instagram

After you determine your Instagram audience, do a competitive analysis to see what other marketers in your field are posting as the information you gather from this audit will serve as a benchmark as you start growing your own account. If you already know your top competitors, start with searching for their Instagram profiles. If not, try searching for terms related to your business or industry to find similar, relevant accounts.

Conduct a quick audit of those accounts looking specifically at

- What types of posts are getting the highest amount of engagement?
- What popular hashtags they are using
- What kinds of captions they are writing?
- How often they are publishing
- How quickly they are growing
- Are there any marketing opportunities they might have missed?

## Choose Your Content Strategy (More on this Later)

Instagram is an inherently visual social platform and the content you share with your audience is the backbone of your marketing campaign. It should be relevant, valuable and engaging for your followers whilst at the same time being consistent with your brand and strategy.

### *Common Types of Content*

- **Product Based Content:** This is a popular Instagram marketing strategy focusing all your posts on your products in a straightforward marketing campaign. All your followers receive pictures and videos of your products exclusively.
- **User Generated Content:** Another effective marketing strategy is to rely on user generated content. The aim is to create campaigns focused on attracting a large audience who are willing to get involved with the brand's channel and hashtags and upload their own content. For example, upload themselves using the product etc.

Successful brands use a mixture of both on Instagram. Once you have decided on the type of content for your strategy, you importantly need to think about the hashtags you will use to supplement and enhance the content. Hashtags are sometimes just as important as your brand image and they will help you grow followers exponentially if used correctly. You can use popular hashtags to get more chances to be discovered through search engines but at the same time, you can choose to use less popular tags if they are properly targeted inside a specific niche. By all means you can create your own user generated hashtags to build your brand awareness, and for competitions you are running etc.

## Setting Up an Editorial Calendar

On average, brands post about six images per week on Instagram which adds up to over 300 posts per year! With that many posts, it can be difficult to keep track of all the content you need to post as well as what you have already posted. Instagram does not reward quantity but if you are consistent and able to deliver quality content frequently, your followers will reward you with a higher engagement rate.

Creating an editorial calendar is a helpful way to cut down on the amount of time required to manage your Instagram presence and is also a great place to record any key events you want to highlight on your Instagram account such as new product launches, national holidays, special observances or special offers. Ultimately, your content schedule and the frequency of your posting depends on two things your available time/resources and what your audience wants. This is why after the first couple of months, you should look to study your audience and try to find out vital insights such as when to post in order to get the most engagement as this will guide your strategy going forward.

## **Building a Consistent Brand on Instagram**

It is clear when a business on Instagram doesn't have a consistent brand strategy as their content is random, sporadic and disjointed, which will do nothing but confuse their audience and will likely cause an account to lose followers. To avoid this, it is important to maintain a consistent brand aesthetic across your Instagram account. To determine what yours looks like, start by thinking about your brand personality. What are your brand values? What is your brand personality? Are you bold and adventurous with a bright colour palette? Or are you sensible and regal and use a lot of purple in your brand? Ideally, someone should be able to see a picture in their feed and intuitively know that it's from your brand just by looking at the photo.

## **Utilize Paid Advertising**

You can create a successful marketing strategy on Instagram without paying for ads but only to a certain point. If you want to be sure of your future success, you need to capitalize on this feature and leverage the opportunities available to you to boost traffic, sales and awareness. It is important to note that at current, the advertising feature on Instagram is linked with Facebook ads and cannot be used independently. In a nutshell this means, you will have to create a Facebook account as well in order to use them, in case you don't have one already. Whilst it might appear to be somewhat annoying to have to do this, it is of tremendous benefit to you as Facebook has access to more user data than any other social media or advertising platform. Therefore, you can be assured that you are getting the best ad targeting option available for marketers with great results in the long term.

### ***Here are some top tips for maximising advertising campaigns on Instagram:***

- **Use eye-catching images:** Ads are not intrusive and are shown in users' feeds just like any other posts, therefore your ads need to be as attractive and persuasive as your regular posts. This means that you need to focus on great imagery, professionally quality photos and attention-grabbing captions.
- **Target your ads precisely:** To maximize your gains from the advertising campaign you must target your ads precisely. This means carefully studying your followers, potential customers and your competition to identify specific segments of your targeted population and deliver your ads to them. The more you can narrow down the pool of potential customers, the better the results will be.

## Creating a Content Strategy for Instagram

Visual content is at the heart of Instagram. The 100 million photos and videos shared daily to the platform are the reason more than 300 million people visit the app every day. Instagram is a powerful platform for marketing and advertising purposes and creating quality, engaging content should be at the core of your strategy, but what should you post about?

There is no definitive rule for the best strategy to take when it comes to your content — it will vary from business to business. What is important is to focus on creating content that resonates with your audience and is aligned with your goals. This first step to defining what this content is starts with defining themes for your content.

### Create Your Content Themes

Content is the foundation of your Instagram presence. Every business, no matter its size or industry has access to a wealth of potentially brilliant content to share on Instagram. Whether it is new products launches, behind the scenes access, a feature in the local news or a meet the team segment, there's a whole host of subject opportunities you can utilize for your videos and photos. Based on your target audience and objectives, the key to success is to develop a plan to deliver eye-catching content to your audience on a consistent basis. To start, review your objectives and determine what aspects of your brand to showcase in your Instagram content. Products, services, team members and your local community all offer rich potential for subject matter. Once you have a list of specific content themes, brainstorm possible subjects for your images and videos. Building content themes around what you know works is essential to success, a quick Instagram audit will tell you everything you need to know about what content is resonating best with your audience. Once you have your data, develop your content themes around that style of visual, whether it is photos with animals, brightly coloured images or videos of your product.

#### ***Examples of Popular Content Themes:***

- Behind the scenes content
- User generated content
- Product demos / showcase
- Educational
- Humanising Content
- Fun/Meme/Humour
- Customer Stories
- Meet the Team

Creating content themes can be a fun, creative and interactive task for you and your staff and can be as simple as starting with a pen and paper and throwing around some ideas. Start with your key company values and write down everything that comes to mind from it, including associated visuals including brand colours. From these notes, you can then start to formulate ideas for your key content themes. Once you have your content themes in place you can pull them all together to create a content plan. Included in this plan should be a consideration of the style and aesthetic feel of your posts, alongside your posting frequency.

## Determine Content Types and Strike a Balance

Instagram started as a photo-sharing app, but its creative users now publish everything from graphics and videos to Boomerang videos. Quality matters on Instagram so when you put together your content for your social media schedule consider a striking a balance of content types that will work best for the resources you have and the engagement you want from your audience. For example, if your audience loves a high-quality video that tells a compelling story about your product, work them into your content more often. Beyond simply uploading a simple snap, Instagram has matured and offers several supplementary apps that help you get even more unique and creative content with your posts. Some of those include;

- **Hyperlapse:** This app allows users to shoot stop-motion time-lapse. While the camera moves a short distance, the action between each shot is rapid.
- **Layout:** Combine photos and videos together in a single Instagram post through custom layouts and features like mirrored landscapes.
- **Boomerang:** Similar to a GIF, Boomerang plays a short cut video forward, but also backward, repeatedly to create a nonstop motion.

No matter how great your content, there will be always room for more when it comes to social media marketing. Beyond settling for the basic, a good strategy will benefit and indeed take advantage of the additional and more advanced content options available.

- **Instagram Stories:** This feature allows you to interact with your followers by sharing posts without the worry of over posting. You can share as many images and ideas you want throughout a day and create stories that will disappear from your profile grid or feed after 24 hours. This is a great way to grow your audience because every time you post, you get on top of your followers' feed.
- **Instagram Live:** This feature is most effective when you have a significant number of followers. Just like stories, videos from Instagram live appear at the top of your followers' feeds and are a great tool to showcase new products or engage with your fans.
- **Consider Contests:** Contests are a great, proven way to attract more followers. Example popular content types include;
- **The Comment Contest:** Ask your followers to post comments on one of your posts in order to enter the contest.
- **Photo Contest:** Ask your followers to post images with a brand specific hashtag you've created.
- **Live Content:** Engage with your followers in a live session, ask them something and the first who are answering in the comment section will win the prize.

## Establish Posting Frequency and Schedule Content

To establish and maintain an active presence on Instagram you need to determine a constituent frequency with which you will post. Developing a content calendar that integrates your themes key dates and campaigns in advance is a great way to ensure you are consistently seen by your audience and

maximising opportunities for engagement. Whilst some of the best content for Instagram will occur spontaneously, scheduled Instagram posts work to fill in the gaps in between and always ensures you are getting the messages out that you need to. You will come to find using your insights what post frequency works best for your audience. So, take what you learn and apply it to future content calendars.

## **Establish Clear Guidelines on Team Roles, Style Guide & Workflow**

Even if only one person is responsible for managing your business Instagram account, there is so much more to consider than just what filter you are going to use for your photo. To ensure your brand is consistent and unified on Instagram it is a really good idea to establish clear guidelines on important factors such as visual composition, filters, location tagging, hashtags and captions. Planning and maintaining a brand aesthetic and style in advance is key to maximizing the potential of each Instagram feature and functionality.

**Top Tip:** Depending on your team and objectives, you might divide responsibilities into content creation and publishing, community management, discovery and analytics, and assign them to team members with different strengths.

Start by reviewing the existing visual representations of your brand: your logo, website, graphics, photography and other collateral. Do you have an established colour palette? A tone in pictures? Your Instagram content, and everything you choose between should reflect the same branding to create a sense of visual harmony when a user looks at your profile. Consider creating a social media style guide to maintain consistency.

## ***How to Create Your Instagram Style Guide***

Style guides contain all the necessary information for a piece of content to ensure consistency across all marketing channels and throughout every piece of content you produce. From the design and layout of post to the copy and hashtags that accompany it. When it comes to Instagram you should consider the following items: Composition, Colour, Fonts, Filters, Captions and Hashtags.

**Composition:** Composition refers to the placement or arrangement of visual elements or ingredients in a work of art, as distinct from the subject of a work. Define a few quick composition rules which can include things like: Solid background colour and main focus of the picture to the Rule of Thirds.

**Colour Palette:** Having a palette does not mean that you have to strictly only use these colours, but it will help your posts have a familiar, consistent and focused feeling.

**Fonts:** Keep things consistent with your brand by choosing the same fonts you use on your website or other marketing materials.

**Filters:** Instagram filters are a great tool as they enhance photos with just a few taps, making you feel like a pro! Filters can drastically change the look and feel of a photo or video, so it is important to use only a few that you feel best represent your brand — and stick to the few you've chosen.

**Captions:** Instagram captions are limited to 2,200 characters and are a great way of enhancing your content further. They are regularly used as a place for sharing stories, micro-blogging, asking questions and encouraging replies.

**Hashtags:** Hashtags are a uniform way to categorize and discover content. Research from Track Maven found that posts with over 11 hashtags tend to get more engagement. When it comes to choosing the right hashtags for your content, it is best to do your research and see which hashtags people in your market are using and which are most active.

## **Put Effort Into Your Captions**

While captions are limited to 2,200 characters and truncated with an ellipsis after three lines of text (so try to include the most important part of your message within those first three lines!), they are still an important part of your post. You have the space to say something engaging, inspire action and feed your brands story so make sure your captions are put to use! After all, a great image alone is great, but one with a story is even better.

## **Learn to Love Hashtags**

Instagram hashtags are a clear signal to users that your posts are relevant to what they are looking for. In fact, many users look for content based on hashtags alone. To see the most success out of your Instagram hashtags, make them easy to discover, remember and read. You can search directly in the Instagram search bar to find trending hashtags and scope out content that others are posting.

## **Try Social Sharing Across Networks**

Instagram allows you to connect your profile to accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr amongst others. It is simple to automatically push your Instagram posts to various network so determine whether you want to cross-post or promote your Instagram content in this way and take advantage of the simplicity if you do!

# **How to Craft Instagram Posts That Drive Sales**

Instagram allows you to post several types of content including photos, videos, and Stories. Below are several different Instagram post types and some best practices for encouraging engagement.

## **Images**

The most common type of post on Instagram is an image post. When creating image posts, it's important to post a variety of different photo content types. Instagram users are looking for genuine posts from brands not overt advertisements so avoid posting too many photos of your products/service. As you start to explore the platform, you will see there are many kinds of images you can post to your account, what is important is to take note of any concepts or styles you come across when connecting



with other and monitoring your competition, that you think would work well for your brand – and get creative! To get you started, below is a list with some of the most successful Instagram image types.

- **Behind the Scenes Posts:** These posts are designed to humanise the brand by offering a glimpse into a part of your business or brand that people do not normally see.
- **Repost From Employees:** Sometimes you do not need to look any further for great content than your own employees. Reposting great photos from your employees is an easy way to curate authentic content and help humanize your business.
- **Educational Posts:** These types of posts offer quick tips on how to do or make something – often related to your product or industry.
- **Influencer Posts:** Tap into an expansive audience by piggybacking on the fame of a celebrity or well-known public figure to draw attention to your brand. These posts often include a visual of the influencer using or interacting with your product.
- **Motivational Posts:** A motivational post usually combines a simple visual with uplifting text or quote overlaid on top. They can be a great way to motivate your audience but be careful not to appear cheesy.
- **User Generated Content:** User generated content is curated content from your fans and followers. Look at your tagged photos or posts using your brand hashtag and consider reposting high-quality images that are particularly positive. Remember to @mention the original poster in the caption as this gives a nice shout-out to the fan showing you care, but also has the benefit of boosting your brand.
- **Special Observances:** Join in with relevant fun observances like National Hamburger Day and National Sibling Day to reach a wider audience and tap into potential great engagement. Just ensure the observances are relevant to your brand and not just for the sake of joining in.

## Top Tips for Images

- ✓ **Instagram Photo Sizes:** Square (classic): use a high quality 1080 x 1080 pixels image. You can use the same resolution 1080 x 1080 pixels also for the videos. Landscape (horizontal): A great choice for panoramas, "large" photos and HD videos. Use a high-quality image 1920 x 1080 pixels wide. For Landscape Videos use a format of at least 1200 x 673 pixels in full view or retina display if you do not have an HD video. Otherwise, prefer the 1920 x 1080 pixels full HD format. Portrait (vertical): The format here is 1080 x 1350 pixels. Instagram Stories (vertical): Prefer the 1080x1920 pixels format both for videos and images. Remember the video should be compressed into an mp4 format.
- ✓ **Follow the Rule of Thirds:** When composing your photo, you should aim to place your subject at the intersection of one set of vertical and horizontal lines. By placing your subject off centre, it creates a slight imbalance that will catch a viewer's eye. To switch the grid on in an iPhone, go to "Settings," choose "Photos & Camera," and switch "Grid" to on.
- ✓ **Focus on a Single Subject:** Try to focus on a single subject in each photo and remove distractions by cropping them out or finding a clean background to shoot against.

- ✓ **Take Advantage of Negative Space:** Negative space is the empty space around your subject. Allowing for empty negative space around your subject ensures attention is focused on the desired focus of your image and prevents it from looking crowded.
- ✓ **Show Different Perspectives:** People are used to seeing the world from eye level. To create interesting and fresh photos, share shots from different perspectives to break up the monotony e.g. (birds eye view). Experiment with different angles to find new perspectives on common sights.
- ✓ **Symmetry and Patterns:** The human eye is naturally drawn to symmetrical shapes and objects. Similarly, people are also drawn to patterns. Sometimes a pattern could be man-made, such as a tiled floor, while other times it could be natural, such as petals on a flower.
- ✓ **Use Natural Light:** Try to use soft natural light to prevent harsh shadows that can create unwanted dark and light areas in your photos.
- ✓ **Adding Filters and Editing Photos:** Thanks to Instagram's built-in tools and filters, editing photos is simple, only taking a few minutes and can have a huge impact on the quality of your photos. Each Instagram filter has its own personality that can drastically change a photo. Simply Press the "Edit" button to adjust your photo's alignment, brightness, contrast, structure, and more. Press "Next" when you are done to add final details and publish.

## Videos

Instagram also lets you upload videos up to 60 seconds in length. You can download videos from your computer for upload or you can film and edit together videos yourself using mobile apps such as a Splice which is a free popular editing tool that allows you to cut together multiple clips and add titles and music. Keep in mind that Instagram videos begin playing without sound so ensure your videos don't need sound to be understood.

- **Boomerangs/GIFs:** Boomerangs and GIFs allow you to put a quirky spin on traditional video by adding repetitive, looping motion. A Boomerang post takes a burst of photos and then converts them into a perfectly looping short video that plays repeatedly. These kinds of posts are great for anything with repetitive motion like someone jumping or toasting glasses.
- **Hyperlapse:** An app from Instagram that allows you to condense lengthy videos into shorter, engaging content. To create your own Hyperlapse videos, download the free app onto your mobile device. When prompted, allow it to access your camera, tap the circle once to begin recording, and again to stop. Once you are done recording, you can choose a playback speed between 1X and 12X. Save the final Hyperlapse video to your camera roll to upload later.
- **Stories:** Instagram Stories allow users to post at a higher frequency without worry of over posting. While your profile feed should feature high-quality polished photos, Stories can be a little rawer which have the benefit of making you appear more authentic. Stories are a helpful tool to showcase live events your business hosts or attends, give a behind-the-scenes look at your brand or showcase your company culture. Like Snapchat Stories, your Instagram Story disappears after 24 hours.

Instagram also allows you to tag another account in your Story which is a great way to connect with other businesses and marketing partners. To tag someone, type the "@" followed by the

username of the person or brand you would like to mention. When someone views your story, the username will appear underlined indicating that they can tap it and be directed to the profile. You will receive a notification if you've been mentioned in someone's story. When you are ready to publish, press the Your Story + icon or save it to your camera roll to publish it to your Instagram account. Stories appear at the top of the Instagram feed and in your profile picture. To see who viewed your content, swipe up when viewing your Story.

- **Instagram Live:** Instagram also has a live video option to share content with your audience in real time. To start a live video stream, open the camera within the app, select the "Live" option from the menu at the bottom of your screen, and click the button to "Start Live Video." Once you start the live video, any of your followers who are currently on the app will receive a notification so they can watch. Live viewers can also comment on the live video using the built-in chat feature. Live videos are a great tool for showcasing exciting, real-time content or engaging moments like Q&As. Just remember to not overuse this function and save it for special events/moments.

## How to Write an Instagram Caption

Instagram has recently changed its algorithm so that a user's feed is curated based on what they will likely find engaging. In a nutshell, this means the visibility of your posts will depend on the number of Likes and comments it receives. This puts pressure on you as a business competing online to create content that is designed to delight and engage your audience. The maximum character count for a caption is 2,200 characters, but remember, users will only be able to see the first 3-4 lines of the caption before they are prompted to view "more." Ensure you put your most important phrases at the beginning of the caption but do not be afraid of creating long captions as Instagram can be a great way to share your brand story. Use the caption wisely to direct people to a desired action whether that is to take part in a competition, read your latest blog post, discover a latest product or simply as an encouragement to your audience to "like" your photo, comment on it, or share it with their friends. Instagram also allows you to add a link to your bio. Brands often use this to encourage customers to check out a new product or blog post, regularly changing the link to make sure it corresponds with their most recent posts/competitions etc. A top tip is to use shortened tracking links in your URL so you can see how much of your traffic came from your Instagram account.

The most important tip is to experiment find your distinctive Instagram 'voice.' What works on LinkedIn will not translate to Instagram for example. The key is to try experimenting with emojis and other creative tools/apps to give your brand a distinct, light-hearted, authentic tone. It can take a while to develop your brand's voice, so do not give up if you do not get it right the first time. If you are ever struggling in doubt about what to write, just keep it short and simple and allow your visuals do the talking.

## **How to Find Your Best Frequency and Timing on Instagram**

Maintaining a consistent and frequent publishing schedule helps your audience learn when to expect new content from you and has the added benefit of making sure you maximize frequent engagement as you have less chance of hitting any lulls or stretches without updates. A study by Union Metrics found that most brands post to Instagram daily with the average number of posts at 1.5 posts per day. At the very basic, it is recommended that you aim to post at least once per day on Instagram and experiment with additional posts to find what level works best for you.

## **What Time Should you Post to Instagram?**

Timing is one of many elements considered by Instagram's algorithm when it decides what content to show you. From this, it is important to post at the times when your content is likely to pick up the most engagement. A recent study showed lunch time from 11am-1pm is the best time to post on Instagram, followed by evenings from 7-9pm. However, it is best to treat those times as guidelines since the best time to post rely on a bunch of factors and vary from profile to profile. Just experiment and find out what works best for you and your audience.

## **How to Ensure Consistent Posting on Instagram**

Once you have determined your content themes and the frequency at which you'd like to post to Instagram, one of the best ways to ensure you stick to your strategy is to create a content calendar that tracks which posts will be shared and when. Using a calendar lets you step away from the task of creating just one piece of content to see an overall view for the weeks even months to come. It also provides more time to create specific content pieces that contribute to a larger goal for the company. Consider using Excel or Google Sheets, or whatever tool is best for you and consider:

- The type of content you want to publish: What image/video will resonate with your followers and attract potential new followers?
- What do you need to do to create the above chosen content? Canva? Filters? External Apps?
- Who is your target audience? Define who your demographic is and who would be most interested in the visuals you have to offer.
- Will you use location tags? What about hashtags? (Top Tip: Store a variety of hashtags in your phone's notepad feature to easily cut and paste)

## **How to Use Hashtags on Instagram**

Hashtags are a keyword or keyword phrase that are used to categorize and reference anything from events, entertainment, breaking news, conferences or reoccurring themes and are a great way to make your content more visible. With 95 million photos shared every day on Instagram, it can be difficult for

your account to get noticed. Hashtags are a great tool to utilize to get you noticed as they work by connecting posts from users who are not otherwise connected into a single feed. Basically, this means that if your account is set to public, anyone searching the hashtags you used can see your post. Just remember, your account must be public for your posts to appear on hashtag feeds.

Instagram's hashtag feeds are quite simple to navigate and make it easy for users to find related content. They are split up into three parts - top posts, most recent posts, and related hashtags.

- **Top posts:** appear at the top of a trending hashtag or location feed and feature nine posts that have seen a lot of engagement.
- **Most Recent:** posts feature a live stream of every post that has used that specific hashtag in chronological order. If you are using a popular, trending hashtag, your post will quickly get pushed down the queue!
- **Related Hashtags:** are a great way to find other hashtags people are using to discuss a topic. For example, if you are planning on tagging your post with #Tea, you may want to tag related hashtags like #Cuppa, #Brew or #Teabreak to broaden your post reach. Using hashtags is easy! Simply create hashtags using characters, numbers, or emojis and add up to thirty to your post's caption or comments.

## The Different Types of Instagram Hashtags

Understanding the different types of hashtags and their corresponding audiences is key to developing an effective Instagram hashtag strategy:

- **Community Hashtags**  
Community hashtags are hashtags that connect like-minded users around a specific subject. They are a great way to connect with others, improve the searchability of your posts, gain followers, and grow your own community. Here is an example of different types of community hashtags you can use for your business:
  - Hashtags indicating your product or service, like #coffeeshop
  - Hashtags indicating your niche in your industry, like #weddingphotographer
  - Hashtags for Instagram communities in your industry, like #foodiesofinstagram
  - Hashtags for special events or seasons, like #nationaldonutday
  - Hashtags using location, like #MadeInTheUK
  - Daily hashtags, like #mondaymotivation,
  - Hashtags with phrases relevant to what you do, like #becreative
  - Hashtags with acronyms, like #qotd (quote of the day)
  - Hashtags with emojis, like #shoes👟

You should aim to use a variety of hashtags on your posts and stories so your posts can reach different communities. For instance, if you have a bakery in Lancashire, you can use #LancashireBakeries to reach those looking specifically for bakeries in Lancashire, but also use #BakersLife for those who are interested in your day-to-day life as a baker.

- **Branded Hashtags**

A branded hashtag is a hashtag that is unique to your company when using Instagram for business. It can be as simple as your company name, tagline, or the name of one of your products or campaigns. Branded hashtags are designed to connect themes for you and your audience. Getting your Instagram followers to use your branded hashtag in their posts and stories is key to getting discovered on Instagram by new audiences. Once you create your hashtag, remind customers they can use your business' hashtag by sharing it on your stories or in your captions. It is also a good idea to follow your branded hashtag to keep track of any posts where people are using your business' hashtag.

- **Campaign Hashtags**

While branded and community hashtags are meant to last, campaign hashtags are usually shorter-term and run for just a few days, a season, or a year. The reason campaign hashtags are shorter-term is because they are usually tied to specific campaigns, like new product launches, special events, or partnerships. For example, you can use the hashtag #12daysof to promote a holiday campaign.

## **Choosing an Instagram Hashtag**

If you are searching for what hashtags to use from the beginning, brainstorming keywords and researching trends is easiest in the Instagram app itself, your best option is to start in the "Explore" tab. There you can click on popular posts to see what hashtags were used. If you already have a hashtag in mind, you can also use the "Explore" tab to find popular, related hashtags. To do this, click on the magnifying glass at the bottom of your app and type the hashtag in the search bar. Filter your results by "Tags" to see how many posts have used that hashtag and other related hashtags. You should aim to pick a mix of general, popular hashtags and more specific hashtags to increase your post audience, relevancy and 'shelf life'. In some cases, you may want to create your own branded hashtag. Businesses have created their own hashtags for many great benefits, for example to roll out a new product or Instagram campaign, promote an event, and much more. If you are planning on using your own hashtag, be sure to do some research to make sure it's not being used for another purpose, by a competitor or has negative connotations associated with it and once you have found a good one for your business, encourage your audience to use it.

## **Where to Place an Instagram Hashtag into Your Content**

Great news, you have a wonderful piece of content and you have chosen the perfect mix of hashtags - all that is left to do is figure out where to incorporate those hashtags in your content. The major rule is that Hashtags should feel natural in your caption so do not spam. If you are struggling to fitting your hashtags into the language of your caption naturally, you can put them at the end of your caption or in the first comment. Do not feel pressured to incorporate them directly into your caption copy - they work the same no matter where they're placed.

## How Many Hashtags Should You Use?

There is no hard-and-fast rule when it comes to deciding how many hashtags you should use. While some experts recommend using the maximum number of hashtags allowed, because it gives you more opportunities to be discovered, others recommend using just 5-10. At the end of the day, it is up to you. If you can find 20 relevant hashtags to add to each post, then go for it. However, if you do not feel comfortable using that many, feel free to opt for less. It is always best to experiment with the number of hashtags you use on a post to find the sweet spot for you.

## How to Get More Followers on Instagram

As with all social media platforms, whether you are an established business with thousands of followers or you are just starting out, growing your following takes consistent time and sustained effort. You may be tempted by the many ads out there that offer you the easy way out and give you the offer to buy followers - do not do this. Purchasing followers will not get you any future engagement, which is exactly what you need to make sure your posts are seen in a user's feed. Luckily, there are a few easy to implement things you can focus on to start gaining more followers the right organic way.

- First and foremost, get the basic rights and **make sure your username is recognizable and searchable**. It is simple, If people cannot find you, they cannot follow you! You also need to craft your bio so it is direct and entices the user to follow you. It is one of the first things someone sees before they make the decision to follow you so be sure to include who you are and what you do and a strong call to action.
- Once your profile is optimized, **start posting!** It is a good idea to get a solid number of posts up (15 or so) before you really start engaging people and working hard to get followers. If users visit your profile and find it empty, they likely will not follow. So, make yourself 'likeable' by having a profile that is filled with high quality unique, original, content that is in line with your brand visual image and values. Make yourself a 'must follow' account in the eyes of your target audience.
- After you have posted some content, **start following accounts that interest you and relate to your business**. Think of Instagram like a community and look for other businesses in your area or influencers who might enjoy your product/service. After you follow an account, interact with their content as this is the most natural way to engage the community and draw attention to your own Instagram account. Remember to appreciate your followers by responding to their comments and engaging with their content.
- Next, **encourage others to share your content**. Invite brand ambassadors to share your account and tap into a wider relevant audience by collaborating with similar accounts. For example, if you are a dog groomer, you can team up with a dog clothing shop and offer exclusive discounts to each other's audiences.

- **Promote your Instagram on other channels.** Include an Instagram social share button on your website or encourage your followers on another platform to follow you on Instagram. Sometimes the fastest way to gain more followers is to simply ask for them!
  
- **Make your content discoverable by using other influencers** as that will help you build your community. Influencers will certainly amplify your reach if they share your posts with their followers. You can contact them directly and ask for a collaboration or sponsorship or simply tag them into a particular piece of interesting content you have shared and share under some of their tags to get noticed and forwarded.
  
- **Explore the Instagram community:** Instagram has introduced the Explore tab, “making it faster to find people you want to follow”. At the bottom of your screen, there is the Explore icon. Open this feature to see 4 tabs: Top, People, Tag and Places. The People tab will help you find new and interesting accounts you may follow or contact. You will soon master the art of Instagram and amass a large, active following by choosing to be a part of the Instagram community. Instagram is a social network, and therefore it will work best for your interest, if you use it as such. Form relationships with your followers and other relevant companies and participate in active discussions and link or comment other peoples’ photos or videos. Once they are aware of your presence, they will most likely share your content with their own audience if they find it valuable.
  
- **Post on other social media channels as well:** Whilst some of your potential customers will see your posts on Instagram, to have a successful marketing campaign and attract as many Instagram users as you can, you should also consider posting on other social media platforms. This tactic works well with Facebook as the two platforms are interconnect anyway. You stand a great chance of reaching two audiences this way as some of the Instagram users who are not able to see your posts on this platform may see them on Facebook and follow you over on Instagram as well.
  
- **Make sure your content is discoverable.** You can use the Explorer tab to also make your posts easier to be discovered by Instagram users. To do this, you should research the most popular hashtags and use them in your posts. The more people are searching for a hash tag you have included in a post, the more likely is to be discovered by them and grow your audience. There are a few things to avoid here however, firstly do not overuse these hashtags and do not obsess over your branding. You should not force your brand name on every post as this will be seen as pushy and spammy, and at the same time, there is no need to include irrelevant hashtags. Do not jump on a hashtag for the sake of it just because it’s trending, content should be relevant, consistent and valuable in order to attract more attention.
  
- **Host a giveaway with another business.** Partnering with another business is a tried and tested method to work wonders for your following. The idea being that you both have similar customer profiles so can both ‘tap’ into each other’s audiences and both gain high-quality followers. Just



make sure to request that everybody who enters your giveaway 'likes' the post and does some secondary action, like a follow, tag or add your post to their story.

- **Repost Other Businesses' Content.** If you are looking to gain a huge following on Instagram the smart and organic way, consider sharing other brands' content on your account. When you tag another business in your post and promote their content, they are likely to reciprocate. In a lot of cases, they will follow you back and give you a bit of promotion to, which is wonderful for you as their followers are likely to be exposed to your profile.
- **Let an Influencer Take Over.** This is a popular tactic that connects your business with an influential person in your industry with the aim of exposing your company to the influencer's (often very large) followers. For example, if you are in the business of selling leisurewear or gym equipment, you might collaborate with an athlete or fitness model. You can find relevant businesses and individuals to partner with searching relevant hashtags relating to your industry, stalking your competitors, consulting Google or by signing up to influencer marketing platforms.
- **Write Captions That Move Your Audience.** Posts with strong captions can help shape your business personality and story. The goal is to convey the story or feeling behind your video or image and convey why people should care about you. In general, the key is to craft copy that encourages engagement and makes people realize they need what you are offering. Do not forget to include a few emojis.

## How to Convert Instagram Followers into Customers

Once you have worked hard to establish a dedicated follower base you can start to convert those followers into paying customers. There are several ways to do this, here are a few top tips.

- **Charity:** According to a recent survey, 81% of millennials expect companies to make a public commitment to giving back. Doing so can build love for your brand and help turn followers into customers. It's no secret that brands that team with charity's and put out content that 'pulls at the heartstrings' have a greater chance of going viral.
- **Teasers:** Instagram is a great platform to show your audience glimpses of new products before they become available. While you do not want to spam your followers' feeds with only product photos, a few images can build excitement. You can go the extra mile and team this tactic with Promotions and Contests.

- **Promotions:** Deals, discounts, BOGOs, and other promotional offerings are a great way to drive first-time sales with your Instagram audience. Be sure to mention exactly what is needed to receive the promotional offer and include when the offer expires to create a sense of urgency.
- **Contests:** Promote contests by asking users to follow your account or post content with a specific hashtag to enter.
- **Launch a Product Live:** To give certain launches and extra special buzz, it may even make sense to showcase a new product or service using Instagram Live. You can quickly drive users to purchase by including a purchase link in your bio.
- **Use Checkout on Instagram:** Instagram checkout is a payment feature that will allow users to pay for purchases in-app. A user needs to enter payment details only once and can then begin making purchases, without needing to leave the app and go to a separate website. Perfect as the buying process is shortened! Keep your eyes peeled for when this feature is rolled out in your country.

## How to Optimize Your Instagram Profile to Increase Your Growth and Engagement

Your Instagram profile is essentially your homepage on the platform. It provides you with space to share a little information about your business and gives you the chance to drive some traffic back to your website. There are several ways to maximize your Instagram profile and drive as much value as possible from it, here are a few top tips.

- **Your bio:** What you choose to share in your description here should be representative of your business and show your followers what you do as a company. As the very basic level, most businesses tend to include a brand slogan or tagline and an outline of who you are and what you do. With a 150-character limit, your Instagram bio should focus on what is important about your brand and direct the user to a desired action. If you have one, here would be a great place to include a branded hashtag to inform users how to share and find additional content related to your brand. You have just one link you can include in your bio, and only advertisers can share live links outside that space, so make it count and point it to something valuable.
- **Your profile picture:** is one of the most important parts of your Instagram profile and when someone views one of your posts or clicks on your profile, it's ideal if your brand is instantly

recognizable. For many brands this tends to mean using one of three options: Logo, Logomark (the logo, minus any words) or Mascot.

- **Your link:** Unlike many other social networks, Instagram does not allow you to add links to every post. Instead, you only get one link, and as mentioned that is the one in your profile. Most businesses tend to use this link to drive traffic back to their homepage, to campaign-specific landing pages or individual pieces of blog content.
- **Embrace user generated content:** Curating content from your followers is a win-win scenario as it will help you to build a vibrant and engaged community and can also encourage your audience to share their own creative ways of interacting with your products, services or company.
- **Include some faces in your posts to boost engagement:** Here is something to think about - A study from Georgia Tech looked at 1.1 million random Instagram pictures and discovered something really interesting - Pictures with faces get: 38% more likes and 32% more comments.
- **Experiment with Instagram ads:** 95 million photos and videos are shared on Instagram per day and as more and more brands join Instagram, the feed becomes more competitive and it can be harder to stand out. With Instagram ads, you can reach the specific groups of Instagram users you want to connect with, engage them, and convert them into customers.
- **Follow Industry Accounts & Instagram Influencers:** For example, if you are a clothing retailer, you'd want to follow top fashion bloggers. By following top accounts in your industry, you can easily keep an eye on interesting content, find other accounts of note to follow in the industry and even find inspiration for your own feed. After you follow, Instagram will recommend other accounts to follow. Importantly though, do not just follow anyone and everyone it suggests, whether it's competitors, political figures or random influencers be sure to vet and inspect anyone you follow to ensure they're appropriate to your brand and audience.
- **Monitor Brand Keywords & Misspellings:** Another way to see who is talking about your brand, even if they are not mentioning your handle, is to monitor branded keywords and common misspellings. To make sure you never miss a beat, actively make the effort to regularly search for your brand name, common brand misspellings, products names, services or events and terms related to your brand.
- **Use Instagram Stories to Test Content:** Stories are a safe way to publish in-the-moment content. Users have a different anticipation for content when it comes to Stories, whilst you can 'plan' to provide links or call to actions to specific landing pages, users respond best to raw

spontaneity. It is therefore highly recommended to make this content easy to read, view and understand so users don't skip you the next time you publish a story. You should explore the feature and test some more "tame" content ideas through Instagram Stories to see what sticks. Just make sure to keep your Stories consistent and in line with the rest of your content and Instagram marketing strategy.

- **Analyse Your Results:** Tracking how well your content performs and your follower growth will allow you to adapt your Instagram marketing strategy going forward. By regularly acting on what your analytics tell you, this allows you to develop more successfully and deliver more content your audience will respond to whilst helping you optimize for future campaigns. As you develop and implement your brand's Instagram marketing strategy, you will learn to find what types of content, posting frequency and engagement practices work for you. Building your brand and growing a following on Instagram is challenging and very much trial and error but learning from your mistakes and avoiding common pitfalls will help you to build a strong brand presence that tells a powerful story and encourages engagement.

## How to Increase Sales Using Instagram

- **Have a Plan of Action:** To be successful on Instagram you need to know from the beginning what it is you want to achieve on the platform and focus everything from the types of content you use, to what Call to Actions you include in your captions on those objectives. Doing so ensures that everything is working as hard as it can for you to achieve your goals. As discussed earlier, have a plan however basic it may be, to ensure you do not end up posting irrelevant content with no consistency and no aims.
- **Eye-catching Pictures with High Quality:** You might not be a professional photographer, but keep in mind that picture quality is a crucially important element of a good and successful brand on Instagram. If you are not good at taking pictures yourself, know your weaknesses, bite the bullet and let someone else do it for you, or if your budget does not allow an extra pair of hands, then simply read some tips and tricks that can improve your skills.
- **Don't just Rely on Instagram:** Whilst Instagram is a great mobile marketing tool to have in your arsenal, it is not the only tool. By design, Instagram works best in conjunction with other sites and especially visually friendly content sites like Pinterest, and Facebook, as these sites also offer the best viral impact for sharing and discussing photos. Instagram can be connected to other social networks very easily, so take advantage of this great feature to give the opportunity for all your audiences on all your different social networks will be able to view them.

- **Get Involved With Your Community:** If you really want to interact and engage with customers, Instagram is one of the best ways of doing it. Providing customer service through social media has quickly become an expectation of users online and providing great customer service to your community and solving your customers problems should always be at the forefront of your efforts. Additionally, such as any social media campaign, you should live by the saying that “no man is an island” meaning you should reach out and interact with your community by liking and commenting on the photos of others too - especially if they mention your product or brand. You should also look to foster engagement and reward your community by regularly hosting contests, scavenger hunts, and other promotions that encourage your community to display your brand on their photo feed and on their other connected social media networks. This is a great way to ensure followers will participate and talk about your brand, it gives them a continued reason to follow you as well as importantly giving them a reward for being connected to you.
  
- **Geo-Tag Instagram Photos:** This - brilliant for businesses- feature puts a place on a literal map. Geo-tagging allows you to add your location to your photos when you post them, and if you use this feature, the service will create a photo map of your posts. This shows you, on a map, where all of your photos have been taken, so this is especially useful if you have a brick and mortar location like a store, office, restaurant, salon, or studio. Adding your location to your photos displays that location above your photo in each post that has been geotagged. People can click on geotagged locations and see all the posts in that area, so this can be another great way to gain followers and interactions as followers who live or work nearby may be more likely to interact with you or do business with you if they see that you are nearby. Beyond these initial benefits, using geo-tags can help you promote your event or your participation at an event in a great way. Restaurants, retailers, and any other brand can promote their location and their products in use using and promoting geo-tagged Instagram photos. In another example a company could make a scavenger hunt out of geo-tagging for contests and other promotions. Importantly, You can toggle your location on and off before you post an image. This comes in handy if you want certain posts to be added to your map but want others to be left off.
  
- **Attract New Customers:** Do not make the mistake of starting a new Instagram account and thinking your business will automatically surge, because unless you are a big celebrity, that’s just not going to happen. The way it works is that as you build followers, more and more of them will begin to take interest in your content and offerings. Over time, this growing list of potential customers will develop - and it will because Instagram is fun, addictive and easy- Only with time and consistently good engagement and content will you build a loyal following. This will then open up valuable branding opportunities, new sales and an army of loyal brand advocates who actually share your content.
  
- **Create Your Own Hashtag and Engage People that Use it:** Creating, using, promoting, and monitoring your own hashtag has many great benefits. For starters, people can easily find photos related to you or your brand, it is easier to interact with your community and is brilliant for brand awareness. A lovely little piece of important information is that when a user likes a photo on Instagram it appears in their News Feed on Facebook! Not only that but if one of their

friend's clicks on that liked photo they immediately go to Instagram's hosted picture and can see all of the comments and your hashtags! They can also share the photo from there as well... what a fantastic trio of benefits you should definitely utilize for your business.

## Getting Started With Instagram Advertising

Instagram advertising offers a unique and brilliant opportunity for brands to engage with their audience. Since Instagram ads appear in the feed like any other post, they aren't as obvious or disruptive as typical ads seen online and across social media. They provide a natural way to encourage users to learn more about your business or product.

### *How Create an Instagram Ad*

Creating an Instagram ad is easy. In fact, if you have ever set up a Facebook ad you're almost there already! This is because even though your ad will run on Instagram, the setup is all done through Facebook's ad platform. To begin creating your ad, select the post you would like to boost in Instagram or create a new one in Facebook Ad Manager. If you have not run ads through Facebook before, you will be prompted to set up an account. You will also need to claim your Instagram Business account to link it to your Facebook page. To claim your Instagram account, go to your Business Manager and, on the left side of the page, hover over the menu to click "Instagram Accounts." Then click on "Claim Instagram Account." Add your account information and click "Next." Next, pick an objective and name your campaign. While Facebook offers many different objective choices, only a few include Instagram advertising as an option. To ensure you are on the right track, pick from any of the following options:

- Brand Awareness
- Reach
- Traffic
- App Installs
- Engagement
- Video Views
- Conversions

Once you have selected your objective, you'll be prompted to name your ad set. Next, you can target your ad using a range of demographic and psychographic factors, including age, gender, location, language, work, financial status, behaviours, and connections. You can also load previously used custom audiences. After you are done selecting your target audience, select "Edit Placements" under the placements options and select "Instagram" under the available platforms. **Do not forget this step! Otherwise your ad will only show up on Facebook.** After you select Instagram as your placement, you'll be asked to set the budget and schedule for your ad. You can set a daily spend budget or a lifetime budget for the ad and indicate start and end dates for your campaign. If you do not set a start and end date or a lifetime budget, your ad will continue to run indefinitely with the daily budget you allocate. You can also access more budget and scheduling options under the "Advanced Options" drop down. Here, you can do things like scheduling your ad to run only during certain hours of the day or set your ad to

generate results as quickly as possible using the “Accelerated” delivery type. This option is useful for ads focused on timely events.

Next, you will see promote to set up the content of your ad. You can boost an existing post or upload a new image and caption to run as your ad. Instagram allows you to create ads using a Single Image or Video, a Carousel Ad, or a Story Ad that runs as a sponsored ad in Instagram stories. To maximize ad delivery, Facebook recommends using images that are at 600 px X 600 px for square format ads, 600 px X 315 px for landscape ads, and 600 px X 750 px for vertical ads. Facebook recommends avoiding too much text on the image or video thumbnail. Once your ad creative is uploaded, you are all set!

### ***How Much Should You Spend on Instagram Ads?***

The total amount you should invest in Instagram advertising campaigns should be tied to your campaign goal, and of course your allocated budget. No matter what your goal, it is important to monitor and optimize your Instagram ads to make the most of your budget and make sure the ads are working as hard as they can for you.

## **A Quick Guide to Instagram Analytics**

One of Instagram’s few flaws lie in its lack of an in-depth analytics platform built into the app the same way Facebook or other social media platforms have. Once you switch your account to a Business Account, you do gain access to some limited analytics like follower growth, impressions, reach, and engagement by clicking on the “View Insights” option below your uploaded images and videos. You can also track impressions, spend, and engagement on ad campaigns through Facebook’s Ad Manager. Whilst all very helpful, these metrics are limited to individual posts and campaigns and certainly don’t give you the full picture of how your presence is performing.

The good news is that you can access more in-depth Instagram metrics with a range of third-party apps. Simply Measured and Iconsquare are (paid) popular tools that allow you to track additional metrics such as followers and engagement over time, optimal post time based on previous posts, and your performance compared to selected competitors. It is worthwhile taking advantage of the free trial that both services offer to see if their analytics offerings are right for you before you make the investment.

Although the individual metrics you track on Instagram will vary depending on your objectives, some basic key metrics to keep track of are engagement levels of your content (Likes and comments) and number of followers over time. As you progress with your Instagram marketing strategy, you will begin to notice some trends such as what types of content resonates best with your audience, your audience growth, and the number of likes and comments your posts receive. All this data shows you what is working and what is not which you can learn from and act on going forward to improve the results of your Instagram marketing.

To gain access to Instagram Insights for your Instagram account, you will have to convert your Instagram profile to a Business Profile. Once you have converted to a Business Profile, you will see a graph icon in the upper-right corner of your profile. That is the button for Instagram Insights.

## Look Out for These Instagram Key Metrics

Regularly delving into your Instagram analytics is crucial if you want to grow your account and reach new audiences. But if you are finding it overwhelming, just focus on these key Instagram metrics to track and notice how your Instagram strategy improves!

### ***Growth***

With Instagram's "followed" and "unfollowed" metrics you can see exactly how many followers you gain and lose each day. Being able have this level of insight is useful for understanding important aspects of your overall strategy such as what content helps to grow your followers and what does not. If you put something out and there is a spate of unfollows that day, you can adjust what you share in your future content plan accordingly. With that being said, try not to get completely obsessed with your follower count. Followers can fluctuate for a variety of reasons, and as it has been said many times, it is always better to have a smaller audience that is highly engaged than a large following that do not engage with your brand at all. An engaged audience is much more likely to share and interact with your posts, purchase your products, give useful feedback and become loyal customer advocates.

If you are looking to improve this metric, the best way to increase your follower growth rate is – of course - to post great content! If you do not post great content, then no one will have any interest in following you. So, before you post always check that your content is interesting, includes relevant hashtags and has a clear Call to Action at the end.

### **Click-Throughs From Your Bio Link**

The link in your bio is the only clickable link spot on Instagram, and as such you need to maximise its potential to give your brand a significant boost. You can send it to any page you want with a single click, so this is a great place to capture leads by encouraging people to visit your website or a landing page. You should keep an eye on the number of people who actually click the bio link and learn if your followers are interested in what you're offering them and adjust the link accordingly.

If you have over 10K followers on Instagram, you can also take advantage of the priceless ability to add direct links to stories. This is a very powerful way to drive traffic from Instagram, and also gives you the opportunity to understand what content motivates your audience to "swipe up." So make them good!

### ***Reach***

The removal of 'likes' counter has now made reach one of the most important and valuable metrics to take into account. Your reach shows how many unique accounts have seen your post, and therefore how much awareness you are generating. Look at each post individually and if a post receives higher or lower reach than usual, you can turn this into actionable insight for your future posts and stories. There are lots of factors that can have a direct impact on a post's reach, so it is worth taking note of what you did with each post. For example, What hashtags did you use? Did you include an engaging CTA? Did you publish when your audience was most active? Did you try something different with your content? Listen to what your insights are telling you and keep doing what is working for your business and stop doing what is not.



### ***Bookmarks/ Saves***

With Instagram saves, users can collect and save a post for later by tapping the “bookmark” icon in the bottom right corner of an Instagram post. These saves ‘tell’ the Instagram algorithm that there is strong interest in your content and therefore the more saves you get on a post, the more people Instagram will show it to. By tracking the number of saves your posts receive, you can understand what types of content get the highest number of saves and use this to guide your future content strategy.

### ***Sales***

Instagram has taken huge steps over the years to help brands to drive and track sales on the platform, examples include Instagram Stories, Shoppable posts, product stickers, checkout, and most recently shoppable AR filters. Instagram also has a clickable link in bio which is a major advantage for e-commerce brands looking to drive traffic and sales from Instagram. To track sales from Instagram, simply add UTM parameters to any links you use. This will allow you to track conversions using Google Analytics (for example), including how much revenue you earned.

### ***Engagement Rate***

Your Instagram engagement rate is a key indicator of how well your audience is responding to your content. If your followers are commenting, liking, and sharing your content you will have a high engagement rate- which is wonderful news! To get your engagement rate you need the following calculation, **Average across all posts:  $[\text{Post interactions} \div \text{total follower count (or impressions)}] \times 100$**

This percentage will often dip as you gain more followers, but it’s still a best baseline for evaluating how much your followers resonate with your content. The average engagement rate on Instagram is 2.1 percent.

### ***Instagram Stories Views***

Using Instagram insights for Stories sheds light on how users view and interact with your Stories and the type of content that resonates best, which can help you shape and plan story content for the future. The Instagram insights you can access for Stories include:

- Impressions – The number of times your Instagram Story has been seen
- Reach – The number of unique accounts that viewed the post on your Instagram Story
- Exited – The number of times a user swiped away from a specific story
- Replies – The number of replies to a particular photo or video in your story
- Viewers – The specific users that have seen a particular post on your story
- Forward – The number of users that skipped this Story post
- Backwards – The number of users that went back from this Story post
- Next Story – The number of taps to the next account’s story

Ultimately you will want the Exited, Forwards and Next Story metrics to be low, as they show people’s disinterest in your content.

## 5 Steps to Getting Started With Instagram Stories for Business

### 1. Plan Your Instagram Stories Content Strategy

Instagram Stories are situated at the top of the home feed and Explore page. In your story, you can post 15-second videos or image slides, which are available for 24 hours. After this time, the content is automatically removed. If you want to extend the life of your stories, you can save them permanently as highlights so people can view them anytime. Through your stories, you can connect and engage more meaningfully with your audience.

It is your choice on what to post whether it is photos, video or a mixture of both. You should experiment to see what your audience prefers best. It is worth noting that images have a higher tap-forward rate than videos. Users are quicker to tap an image to move to the next slide than they are with a video. Plus with video, they're more likely to pause their scrolling to watch it, rather than stopping to read a text overlay or ponder over an image.

When it comes to Instagram, and indeed social media as a whole, sharing a compelling brand story is the key to effective marketing and business growth. Consumers want authenticity from brands, and stories are a very effective way to provide it. You need to create stories that demonstrate what your business is about, shows the faces behind the brand, and gives users an inside look into who you are. For example you could,

- Show your followers your daily work routine or let your employee who is out on the road take over for the story for the day.
- Interview each team member to show the faces the behind the brand
- Show the process of creating one of your products from start to finish
- Answer popular questions within your company's niche or about your company specifically
- Show "behind-the-scenes" content to give your audience a peek at how you do your thing
- Promote your content, like a new blog, eBook, or infographic
- Host a contest or giveaway in which you ask users to create a post a story that tags your account or includes a branded hashtag

Part of your content planning should also be partnering with industry Influencers. The idea being that they have large followings (that you want to tap into) and immense influence over those followers. Therefore, when they recommend a brand/product to their community, a portion of those followers will boost your brand's Instagram presence and sales.

Once you have found influencers who are a good fit for your brand, there are many ways to work with them. For example, the influencer might create a sponsored post about your brand, mention you in a tag, create an Instagram story about your brand, or you might negotiate a cross-promotion where you each promote the other's offerings.

## 2. Create a Stories Post

Instagram offers three options for posting to your Story. You can tap the camera in the upper left, tap the Your Story + button above your feed, or just swipe right. Take a photo by tapping the shutter button or press and hold it to take a video. You can and should add some personality to your content by selecting one of the pens to add a doodle. To choose a precise colour, press and hold one of the colours. Press the "Aa" symbol to add text or an emoji with your keyboard and the smile icon to add stickers. You can then swipe to the left or right to add a colour filter.

When you are finished creating your post, tap your profile picture in the bottom-left corner of the screen to publish it to your story. To view the story you have published, go your main feed and click your profile picture near the top-left corner of the screen (where it says, "Your Story").

## 3. Use Instagram Stories Stickers

Instagram offers a variety of stickers you can use to generate engagement with your followers through your story. To add a sticker, click on the smiley face sticker in the story editing line-up before posting. In the sticker tray that appears, you will find Product, @Mention, Poll, Questions, Emoji Slider, #Hashtag, and other stickers you can add to your stories.

### ▪ Tag a Location

Instagram allows you to tag a location in your stories, which is especially useful if you have a brick-and-mortar business. When people click the location tag in your story, they are taken to a page that shows your location on a map, as well as any other posts that have tagged that location.

### ▪ Giftcard

You can set up gift cards on Instagram to give people a way to support your business. When someone taps the Gift Cards button on your Instagram profile or the Gift Cards sticker on your Instagram story, they will be directed to your partner's website to buy your gift cards.

### ▪ Poll

Using polls in your story is a great way to get feedback from your customers. To add a poll to your story, select the Poll sticker and then type in a yes or no question. You can replace "Yes" and "No" with your own custom responses. After viewers vote in the poll, they will see what percentage of viewers voted for each response.

### ▪ Ask a Question

With the Questions sticker, you can ask open-ended questions which are great for gathering information and generating engagement. Add a Questions sticker to your story to learn anything from what topics and products your audience is interested in, to asking for input about your brand, industry or future products etc.

### ▪ Quiz

The Quiz sticker is a fun, interactive way of asking your audience multiple-choice questions. Once they have made their selection, they'll see whether they got the answer right. When you view your story and swipe up, you can see how many votes each option received and how each person voted.

- **Music Sticker**

Add a music sticker and search for a song. If lyrics are available for the song you select, you can choose different fonts and designs for them, and you can edit which part of the song you want to play. When someone watches your story, they can tap the lyrics to learn more about the artist or listen to more of the song.

- **Emoji Slider**

The emoji slider is a heart-eyes slider that users can drag left or right to register how much they love the content they are seeing. You can put this on anything from a new product that's just launched or a picture of your office dog and ask viewers to drag the slider to register how cute they think he is. Once published, your followers can vote and see real-time results.

- **@Mention Relevant Accounts**

With the @mention sticker, you can tag other Instagram accounts in your stories. Simply type "@" followed by the account's Instagram handle. This can be a great way to connect with influencers you are working with, users who have posted content about your business or your employees/clients. When other users tag you in their story, you get notified and have the option to share their post to your own story.

#### **4. Save Your Best Instagram Stories as Highlights**

Your stories may contain valuable and interesting information that provide insight into your business and offerings. The kind of information that you would ideally want to be accessible 24/7 to anyone visiting your profile! Highlights offer that especially useful feature as they act as 'folders', displayed prominently on your profile that house your treasured stories. They appear below your bio and call-to-action (CTA) buttons and when users tap on one of your highlights folders, they can re-watch the old stories you have saved to that highlight. Your highlights can be anything you want, but there are common themes.

- An 'Offers' highlight with all of your current promotions
- A 'News' highlight with all your snapshots of recent publicity such as articles/ news features
- An 'Insights' highlight that's filled with tips and tricks that your audience will find useful
- A 'Team' highlight that showcases the faces behind the brand
- A 'Product' or 'Services' highlight that showcases all your business offerings

Prospects will often visit your profile to get a better sense of your brand and decide if they want to shop with you. Your highlights act as a compelling CTA so make sure you are putting your best face forward and providing that insight.

#### **How to Add a Story to Your Highlights**

To create a highlights folder, go your Instagram profile and click the New button with the plus sign inside it. In the pop-up window, select the stories you want to add and tap Next. On the next screen, tap Edit

Cover to choose a cover for your highlights folder and name the folder - keeping the name short. When you are finished, tap Done or Add.

To add a story to an existing highlights folder, create a new story or open an existing one and start watching it. Click the Highlights button with a heart on it in the bottom-right corner of the screen then choose which highlights folder you want to save the story to.

## 5. Reach a Wider Audience With Ads

Instagram allows businesses to pay for ad space between user-generated stories. Instagram Stories ads display in a story format, so they take up the entire screen. They are highly effective, if done right, as of the 500 million accounts using Instagram Stories, one third of the most viewed stories come from businesses, and one in five stories gets a direct message from its viewers.

They can be up to 15 seconds long for video or 5 seconds for images. As with regular Stories content, viewers can tap through your ad to get to the next story, so your ad needs to hold their attention.

Stories ads can run for as long as you wish and can be optimised to match the business objective that you have. Here is how you can create a stories ad using Ads Manager:

**Step 1:** Go to Ads Manager. You can either use guided creation or quick creation to create an ad. Click Create.

**Step 2:** Select the Brand Awareness, Reach, Video Views, Conversions, App Installs, Lead Generation or Traffic objective.

**Step 3:** In the Placements section, select Automatic placements or Edit placements. Instagram Stories is selected by default in both work streams.

**Step 4:** Follow the rest of the steps to continue building your ad campaign. When you're ready, click Confirm to publish your changes.

*TOP TIP: You can use the same engagement features for a regular story in your story ad. Asking viewers a question, sharing a poll, or displaying a quiz can be effective ways to hold their attention and get them to interact with the ad. You should also add an obvious CTA. Use a power words such as "Click," "Buy," and "Get" to spur action.*

If you are using a video in your Instagram Stories ad, the first few seconds are the most important. This is when users decide to stick around or not. It is common for brands to lose 20% of their ad viewers by the second frame, so make your video concise and compelling.

# The Ultimate Guide to Instagram Shops

Instagram understands that people are coming on to the app to shop and discover new products. The help brands they have created a wealth of shopping features that tap into people's existing shopping behaviours and help turn your business's Instagram account into a shoppable storefront.

*70% of shopping enthusiasts turn to Instagram for product discovery.*

*87% of people say that influencers have inspired them to make a purchase. When they were inspired by something they saw, they would take steps to find and buy it straight away.*

## What is Instagram Shopping

Instagram Shopping is a set of features across Instagram designed to allow people to shop your photos and videos when they are on the app.

- ***Shops***  
A customisable storefront allowing people to shop directly on business profile pages.
- ***Shopping Tags***  
Shopping tags allow businesses to highlight products from their catalogue in stories and in feed, so that people can learn more.
- ***Instagram Shop***  
An shopping destination in the app where people can discover products and brands.
- ***Collections***  
This feature allows businesses to customise their shop by placing products into themes.
- ***Product Detail Page***  
A product-focused page that showcases all relevant information on an item, including pricing, media and descriptions.
- ***Ads With Product Tags***  
Allow your products to reach more people by boosting shoppable posts. Ads with product tags are able to drive to an owned website or native checkout on Instagram.
- ***Checkout On Instagram***  
Checkout on Instagram allows all eligible businesses to sell their products directly on Instagram. People can purchase products that they discover securely and seamlessly using Facebook Pay, without leaving the app. Businesses that do not use checkout on Instagram can still use other shopping tools that drive off-site to complete the purchase.
- ***Shopping From Creators***  
Use this feature to allow people to shop inspiring looks without leaving Instagram.
- ***Product Launches***  
Allows you to announce an upcoming product launch on Instagram so that people can preview details and set reminders to buy as soon as it is available.
- ***Live Shopping***  
Allows businesses to sell products through their Instagram Live.

## How to Set up Instagram Shopping

Here is a handy checklist for opening an Instagram shopfront and how to use its features to your advantage

### **Step 1.** Make sure that you are eligible for Instagram shopping.

To use this feature, you must be able to answer yes to all the below criteria.

- Is your business located in a supported market?
- Does your business sell physical goods?
- Does it comply with our commerce policies?
- Is your Instagram account a business or creator account? You must convert your personal account to one of these to be eligible.
- Is your account connected to a Facebook Page?

### **Step 2.** Connect to a catalogue.

To continue you need to connect your Instagram business profile to a Facebook catalogue. You can do this in one of two ways.

**Option A:** Do it yourself and use catalogue manager. You can create yourself a new catalogue or connect to an existing one. TIP: If you want to use product tags and stickers make sure you choose an e-commerce catalogue.

**Option B:** Use a Facebook Partner. If setting up the catalogue feels daunting for yourself, Instagram allows you to get a helping hand from one of their certified partners such as Shopify or BigCommerce.

### **Step 3.** Sign into the app and sign up for Shopping.

When your account and catalogue are connected, you can then proceed to the Instagram app to sign up for Shopping. To do this, head to your profile's settings, tap Business and tap Instagram Shopping. Follow the steps shown to you on the screen and then submit your account for review. This review process usually takes a few days, but sometimes it can take longer. Once approved, you can complete setup in Shopping in Settings.

### **Step 4.** Create your first shopping post or story.

Now that you have successfully set up your shop, you can start promoting your products in your posts and stories by adding product tags and stickers to them. To add a tag to your post, start creating a post as you usually would and Tap "Add photo." Add your caption, then Tap on "Tag products". You can then tap anywhere on your photo to create a tag. It will then prompt you to search for product and you can select one. Tap done when you are happy and then share your post. You can feature up to five products

per image or video post, and up to 20 products on multi-image posts. You can also go back and add shopping tags to older posts.

To add a shopping sticker to a story, start to create a story as you usually would. After you have chosen an image for your story tap the sticker icon in the top right-hand corner. Select the product sticker from the sticker tray area then select the product from your catalogue that you want to feature. If you want to, you can move the product sticker to where you would like it to appear on your story. You can change the text colour of the product sticker by tapping the sticker. When you are happy, share your story. Stories can feature one product sticker per story.

**Step 5.** Keep an eye on your shopping Insights to improve your posts.

You can visit the Insights tab in your profile at any time to see how your shopping posts and stories are performing. Accessing these insights on a regular basis is good practice as they will tell you more about what your customers might want, so you can offer more relevant products.

### **Top Tips for Selling on Instagram**

Selling your products on Instagram is a very useful feature, but just as with any other content on social media you need to be creative with your shoppable Instagram posts and Stories to make sure they are engaging and working as hard as they can for you.

#### *Quickfire Tips*

- ✓ When adding shopping tags on your Instagram photos, clearly place the tag so it appears on the product itself rather than in the space around it.
- ✓ Experiment by tagging products in single images or carousel posts to see what works best for your business.
- ✓ According to Instagram, tagging 2 products in your images results in more engagement.
- ✓ Ensure that your captions are engaging and start conversation always. Be authentic and let your personality shine through.
- ✓ Check your insights regularly to see how your shopping posts are performing.
- ✓ With over a billion users, Instagram users are a diverse group. But only 2% of advertising images feature plus-size women and those with disabilities are seriously underrepresented in adverts. Users need to relate to your brand so don't make them feel excluded as will take their business elsewhere. Be inclusive and feature your product on a range of diverse people.



## **Use Eye Catching Visuals**

As with every other post on every other platform, sharing high-quality photos and videos is key to catching someone's eye and stopping users from scrolling on by. Keep images exciting, inclusive and informative. It's worth noting that occasionally Instagram changes up its image and video specifications so keep an eye out on changes so you can make sure you are uploading the correct sizes so your photos look as optimized as they can. Do not forget to pair your photo or video with a thoughtful, engaging caption.

## **Use Hashtags**

Using relevant hashtags on Instagram is a key strategy for all posts and that includes shopping content. They increase your content discovery, can help boost your engagement on each post, and crucially they can help you get features on the Explore page – a "Shop" tab that is visited by more than 50% of Instagram users each month.

- Do your hashtag research and regularly check out what hashtags your competitors are using and which hashtags are popular in your industry. Apply any that you are missing to your own captions.
- Do not over fill your content with hashtags. You can use up to 30 but ideally you should stick to 9 to avoid clutter.
- Double-check the meanings before you hop on to a hashtag. This will avoid an embarrassing mistake!
- Analytics will let you see how effective your hashtags are, so access them to help refine your strategy.

## **Share Your Sale or Promo Code**

Running a promotional campaign is an almost guaranteed way to drive sales. Not only that but offering your Instagram customers an exclusive sale is a great way to build audience loyalty and increase engagement. A great feature is that you can promote the code directly in your shoppable Instagram posts making it even easier for customers to act.

## **Show Your Product in Action With a Video**

The most popular type of video content on Instagram is the how-to video. This lends itself wonderfully to shopping posts as you can offer viewers product education and proof-of-concept within your videos. You should aim to regularly share educational tutorials showcasing the quality of your products and make sure they are tagged to encourage purchase.

## **Establish a Consistent Style**

Having a distinctive and consistent aesthetic on Instagram will help improve your brand recognition and firmly establish your identity. Your signature style on Instagram should complement your brand visuals that you use everywhere else such as on your website, other social platforms, and your product packaging.

- Are you bold? Dark? Bright and energetic? Create an obvious style guide.
- Use the same filter all your posts for a consistent look.
- If you have signature colours, include at least one of them in each post.

## **Share User-Generated Content**

User-generated content is any post or story that has been uploaded by a user that features your product. They are essentially visual testimonials. USG posts are worth their weight in gold for your business as not only do they give you fresh, new product images but they boost your credibility and give you social proof. Posts from real users are considered more authentic and for your potential buyer this translates to higher trust. In fact, 79% of survey respondents say UGM influences their purchasing decisions. Before sharing your UGC to your own feed, just make sure to ask permission from the original poster before reposting, tag them in your repost and ensure the photo actually fits with your brand aesthetic. Check the background of the photo (behind the person if they are in front a mirror for example), language used and gifs included (if any) to make sure there is nothing inappropriate there.

## Tips For Success

### Utilize Stories!

Instagram Stories are highly engaging (and because they require a user to seek them out), they make a highly effective platform for advertising. With over 300 million people using Instagram Stories every day, it comes as no surprise that one-third of the most viewed Instagram stories actually come from businesses. Stories enable you to post a mix of photos and images in a single post that disappears after 24 hours. Their benefits last much longer for your reach and engagement rates though, pushing up your chances of appearing in the Explore section and helping you gain new followers in the process. Crucially, followers are automatically notified of any new pre-recorded or live Stories. Live Stories are ideal for capturing attention because they are happening in the moment, whilst pre-recorded Stories are perfect for in-depth coverage of your products, quick-fire promotions, or sharing narratives.

### Find an Interesting Angle

Find a creative angle for a photo to showcase your product in an interesting way. Think about whether you should show the entire product, frame the shot a certain way or include another item to accompany the product. Whilst you should experiment with different content, once you find the most effective angle for your products, make sure you prioritize that approach in your content calendar to maximize engagement opportunities.

### Explore the full range of Instagram video formats

Instagram recognizes the power and popularity of video and offers a suite of video options for businesses to deploy. From Instagram Stories that can mash up videos and stills into a single ad, to standalone 60-second videos ideal for long-form features, make sure you use the strengths of each video format. Relating to this, it is certainly worthwhile to look into Instagram's video ad formats to promote your business. Instagram offers three key video formats to create Instagram ads: single video ads offer the opportunity to create up to 60-second commercials, 'carousels' enable followers to swipe across for additional images or videos, and Instagram Stories offers a vertical full-screen format where images and videos can be spliced together to create visually-arresting ads.

### Convert Instagram followers into email subscribers

Email remains an imperative channel for building deep customer relations. Ensure you implement the following 3 prong approach. First, create a clickable incentive in your Instagram post, for instance, consider offering free content or a discount. Second, once the audience clicks through, ensure you have a strong landing page waiting for them when they get there that features a call to action linked to an email submission form. Third, create a mailing list!

### **Drive traffic to your website by adding a link to Instagram Stories**

Businesses can add a link to their Story if they have 10,000 followers or more. To add a link, you will need to upload your photo or video to Instagram then tap the link icon at the top of the screen. Type in the link, do a quick preview to check all is well and hit 'done'. A simple but essential option!

### **Use Emojis Effectively**

Nearly 50% of comments or captions on the platform feature emojis. Critically, these are searchable - users can seek out posts that include specific emojis. With over 2,623+ emojis available, it is essential to create a strategy on how to use emojis that captures your brand without looking too informal.

### **Focus on Lighting**

The lighting in a photo can tell a story about your brand so whether photos are taken indoors or outdoors, good lighting is crucial. Even with careful tweaking, Instagram's editing tools often cannot fix a photo taken with poor lighting. Therefore, it is vital to get this basic photography skill nailed down in every photo before you even think about using the advanced filters.

### **Use a Filter**

Each filter has a unique story and feel that it communicates. There is an array of filters at your disposal to communicate a particular mood for your brand and products. Whilst a 'normal' photo is the most popular choice people use and indeed there is an immensely popular #nofilter hashtag dedicated for that purpose, using artistically edited photos can add a lot to your photo. To use a filter, once you have taken or uploaded a photo or video Tap Next, then tap the filter you'd like to apply. Tap the filter again if you want to adjust filter strength up or down using the slider. Then simply tap Done to save your change. The most popular way to upload an image or video is without any filter at all. But for those who do like to use them, Clarendon is the most popular option followed by Gingham, Juno and Lark. The Most-used Instagram Stories Face Filters are Puppy, Bunny, Koala, Genius and Love.

### **Create a Hashtag Campaign**

User-generated content is one of the best ways to promote your community and products. Create a brand-centric hashtag campaign for your followers to use in their posts. Remember that engagement is a two-way street so follow and interact with your followers that are using it and like the posts that are positive and aesthetically aligned with your brand.

### **Use a Call to Action**

Ensure every piece of content has a purpose by adding a call to action to it which prompts customers to do something. It could be as simple as "Shop Now!" or "Download our app." Whatever you choose, make sure the action is relevant to your post as this is a great way to gain new followers.

## **Partner With Influencers**

Consider partnering with influencers to create compelling content to promote your products and increase your reach. Influencers already have built-in distribution lists with large groups of followers and are trusted for their opinions on what products to purchase. By working with influencers, you harness their popularity and tap into their vast and relevant audience which will expand your own follower count and boost sales.

## **Best Times to Post**

Instagram is a mobile App, so users are on the platform at all times of the day. However, there are a few studies out there that have found the optimal times to post on Instagram for peak engagement to be Mondays and Thursdays at any time except between 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 pm and overall, users tend to engage with more content during off-work hours on weekdays. Simply think in the mind frame of your audience and work out when they are most likely to be looking on their phone. For example, if your target audience is a Teacher for example, they are most likely to be active during the evening when they are back home as opposed to during the day when they will be busy teaching.

## **Link Instagram to Your Facebook Page**

One of Instagram's unique features is that it allows you to share your content seamlessly across other social networking sites. Linking your Instagram to your other social accounts like Facebook will increase the number of eyes on your posts and allows you to benefit from targeting both audiences. Be careful however as its not recommended to automatically link your Instagram to every one of your other social platforms as what works on Instagram probably will not yield the same results on other channels and it is important to tailor your content to each platform. Note: Your Facebook Page will already be linked to your Instagram if you set up an Instagram business profile. To link your Facebook page to your Instagram account, start in your Instagram profile by going to the gear in the upper right corner. In the "Options" menu, scroll down to "Settings" and look for "Linked Accounts." If you are not already logged into Facebook on your phone, you will be prompted to do so, and then you will need to pick the Facebook Business Page you'd like to link. Next, you will be directed to the "Share Settings" menu. The Facebook logo should be blue to indicate that sharing is on.

## **See Posts You've Liked**

This is more of a general useful little tip, but handy nonetheless! If you want to take a trip down memory lane, you can easily check out all the posts you have Liked in the "Options" menu of your profile. Press the gear icon and select "Posts You've Liked." Then scroll down until you find the photo or video you are looking for.

## **Use Special Fonts to Jazz Up Your Bio**

You can get creative and incorporate fun and different fonts into your Instagram bio by using a website such as LingoJam. Simply type up your Instagram bio and copy and paste your favourite font into your profile. This is especially useful if your brand voice aligns with certain font styles.

## How to Reorder Instagram Filters

To save precious time when uploading photos, Instagram lets you reorder filters so you can position the ones you use most often at the beginning of your options. To reorder or hide filters, begin editing a post like you normally would. Scroll to the far right in the filter options and click the "Manage" gear icon. Hold your finger down on the three grey lines and drag the filter up or down. To hide a filter, uncheck it on the right side of your screen.

## Hide Posts You've Been Tagged In

If someone tags your brand in a post, it will show up when you click the person avatar in right icon on your profile. To remove a tagged post, click the three dots in the top right corner and choose "Hide Photos." Select the posts you want to remove and click "Hide Photos" again. This will not remove the posts from Instagram, but it will remove them from your profile. If you do not want to have to remove tagged posts, you can manually choose just to include the ones you do like. Click the three dots again and press "Tagging Options." You can then choose to "Add Manually." From here on out, you will be notified when someone tags you in a photo. When that happens, tap on the photo you were tagged in and choose "Show on Profile."

## Utilize Available Tools

There are several useful Instagram marketing tools that will help you get the most out of your marketing campaigns.

### *Ones for Planning, Editing, Scheduling*

**Sprout Social:** A complete social media management tool that offers access to a range of very useful areas from managing multiple Instagram accounts, to robust analytics and planning and scheduling capabilities. You can also communicate easier with your customers, monitor hashtags and track posts from Instagram locations.

**Hootsuite:** One of the most popular platforms for social media management. You can plan campaigns, schedule posts and analyse results of marketing campaigns for multiple social media platforms all in one handy place.

### *Ones for measuring performance and selling products*

**Crowdfire:** This tool help monitor your account, providing useful insights such as those of your new followers or recent unfollows, it will also find the best moments of the day to post and the best and most suitable hashtags for your campaign.

**INK361:** This tool gives you a complete package that allows you to manage and analyse your account, as well as delivering useful statistics based on timing, hashtags, location, number of likes and comments.

**Websta** is a free analytics tool for Instagram that will help you grow your account, understand your audience, customize your Instagram feed, follow posts chronologically, explore hot brands, users and hashtags and engage with your followers.

## 31 Days Of Instagram Content to Get You Started

### DAY 1: SHARE SOMETHING ABOUT YOURSELF

help your audience connect with you sharing with them who you are, where you are from, and what you are passionate about!

### DAY 2: YOUR WORKSPACE/ OFFICE

Show off your workspace makeover or behind the scenes in your office to inspire others. If you don't have a workspace at home then show off your favourite place to do business whether that's a local hot desk or a coffee shop and be sure to tag them in your post!

### DAY 3: PRODUCT / SERVICE

Show off your products and/or service! You can share your most popular one or better still, advertise the fact you have a brand-new product/service you just started offering. Describe it and then send them to your website or landing page to view it.

### DAY 4: SHARE YOUR OFFICE PET

Everyone loves a cute pet picture and they perform very well across Instagram. So share your office pooch at work!

### DAY 5: SHARE WHAT YOU DO AWAY FROM WORK

You are a human being as well as a busy owner! Give your audience a humanising glimpse into your personal life and share what you like to do for fun in your spare time.

### DAY 6: YOUR LATEST BLOG POST

Blog posts are great for showing off your knowledge in the industry so show off your latest blog post or resurface an old popular one.

### DAY 7: ASK YOUR AUDIENCE ABOUT THEMSELVES

Take a break from being me, me, me and ask a question to find out something valuable about your followers! Who are they, where are they from, and what content are they looking for? This gives you great insights into your audience and you can adjust your future posts accordingly to maximise engagement.

### **DAY 8: SHARE A BUSINESS HIGHLIGHT**

Maybe it is finally completing a huge project or simply your businesses birthday, share a recent Milestone your business has reached.

### **DAY 9: WHAT ARE YOU READING?**

What books (or online articles/podcasts if you do not like to read!) have you come across recently that have inspired or motivated you? Remember to tag the author/curator you are promoting.

### **DAY 10: INSTAGRAM EXCLUSIVE OFFER**

Reward your loyal fans and followers by creating a unique code just for them such as 10% off your order using code INSTA10. A unique code also has the added benefit of allowing you to track the number of times this code was used, which is useful for measuring ROI.

### **DAY 11: A DAY IN YOUR LIFE**

Share the human side behind the brand by showing off a typical day in your life – including the fun parts. This will get your audience engaged, entertained and maybe even motivated!

### **DAY 12: GIVE AWAY A FREEBIE**

Create a freebie for your followers to reward their loyalty and provide value. Just keep it relevant to your business. This could be anything from a free eBook to a promotional item such as a mug.

### **DAY 13: SHOWCASE YOUR WORK**

If you are really proud of your recent work or a past project, then show it off to establish your business and show people the kind of work you can do.

### **DAY 14: HAPPY NEWS**

There is a lot of negative stories online, so brighten up someone's day with something that has made you happy and smile. This can be anything from a picture your child has drawn you, something lovely you have seen on the news or even just a picture of your favourite coffee in your favoured place.

### **DAY 15: NATURE**

Flowers or anything in the great outdoors always look pretty on your Instagram and they stand out when scrolling. Maybe you finally planted some new flowers, spotted a deer on your way to delivering an order or a client has treated yourself to a bouquet, share away!



#### **DAY 16: SHAKE UP YOUR CONTENT TYPE**

If you have always shared photos on your profile, now is the time to shake it up and utilize the many features Instagram has to offer! Experiment with a new sticker or if you are really brave, record a video!

#### **DAY 17: SHOWCASE A CUSTOMER/CLIENT**

Share the love by showcasing a valued customer or client of yours. Just make sure you ask their permission first and make sure you tag them if they have an Instagram account!

#### **DAY 18: SHOW HOW YOU RELAX**

You are a busy business owner, that your audience already knows. What they might not know is what you do to wind down after a stressful day. Share your top tips on how you relax after work, it might just be the help they need themselves.

#### **DAY 19: SHARE A HOBBY**

Share what you like to do on the side. Not only does it add to your humanising content, you just never know who may have the same interest to create a connection with, and what that might lead to!

#### **DAY 20: JUMP ON A POPULAR/TRENDING HASHTAG**

Utilize what Instagram is all about by jumping on popular hashtag such as #MondayMotivation or #ThrowbackThursday. If it is relevant to your business, you can also riff on the news and jump on a trending worldwide hashtag.

#### **DAY 21: PR**

Have you featured in the news recently or even just placed an ad in local print magazine? Take a picture and show your audience that you are out and about. Remember to tag the news outlet in your post if they have a profile.

#### **DAY 22: SHOW YOUR PROCESS**

Take your audience on a journey of how you make a product or a how too on some aspect of your service. This is your chance to showcase what sets you apart from your competitors!

#### **DAY 23: YOUR HOMETOWN**

Take your audience on a tour of your hometown or a place you love to go. Get more eyes on posts by tagging in @mentions of businesses along the way.

**DAY 24: SHARE THE LOVE**

Give a genuine, positive shout-out to another business, one of your clients who has their own business or your partners/influencers.

**DAY 25: TIP / TRICKS/ HACKS**

Everyone loves a good tip and if you are filled with useful bits of industry knowledge then share them with your audience to help establish yourself as an expert and valued source of useful information.

**DAY 26: MOTIVATIONAL QUOTE**

People cannot resist a good quote! Share one of your favourites or find one that can particularly resonate with your niche.

**DAY 27: SHARE A USEFUL RESOURCE**

Do you follow a particularly useful blog? or have you found a wonderful product that has completely changed your business? Share what you have found! For an engagement opportunity you can also ask your audience to share their useful finds too.

**DAY 28: SHARE YOUR OTHER SOCIALS**

Let your audience know where else you are online and encourage them to follow you over there too.

**DAY 29: BLAST FROM THE PAST**

Have you found an embarrassing picture of yourself when you were younger? Do you have a picture of your old business gadgets you had back in the day? Share the nostalgia and use it as an excuse to share your journey on how far you have come.

**DAY 30: THANK YOUR FANS**

You should always find some time to thank your followers and show your appreciation for them.

**DAY 31: FUTURE PLANS**

Get your audience prepped for something exciting that's to come in the future, whether that's a new product launch, a new office move or you are launching a giveaway.

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# EXTRA RESOURCES

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## Useful Social Media Links

### *Social Media News and Resource Websites*

<i>Social Media Quickstarter</i>	<a href="http://www.socialquickstarter.com/">http://www.socialquickstarter.com/</a>
<i>Mashable</i>	<a href="http://mashable.com/social-media/">http://mashable.com/social-media/</a>
<i>Social Media Today</i>	<a href="http://socialmediatoday.com/">http://socialmediatoday.com/</a>
<i>Social Media Examiner</i>	<a href="http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/">http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/</a>
<i>HubSpot Blog</i>	<a href="http://blog.hubspot.com/">http://blog.hubspot.com/</a>
<i>KISSmetrics Blog</i>	<a href="http://blog.kissmetrics.com/">http://blog.kissmetrics.com/</a>
<i>Econsultancy Blog</i>	<a href="https://econsultancy.com/blog">https://econsultancy.com/blog</a>
<i>Constant Contact Blog</i>	<a href="http://blogs.constantcontact.com/">http://blogs.constantcontact.com/</a>
<i>Content Marketing Institute</i>	<a href="http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/">http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/</a>
<i>Danny Brown Blog</i>	<a href="http://dannybrown.me/">http://dannybrown.me/</a>
<i>Jenn's Trends Blog</i>	<a href="http://jennstrends.com/">http://jennstrends.com/</a>
<i>Top Dog Social Media Blog</i>	<a href="http://topdogsocialmedia.com/blog/">http://topdogsocialmedia.com/blog/</a>
<i>Wishpond Blog</i>	<a href="http://blog.wishpond.com/">http://blog.wishpond.com/</a>
<i>Boom Social Blog</i>	<a href="http://kimgarst.com/blog/">http://kimgarst.com/blog/</a>
<i>Jeff Bullas Blog</i>	<a href="http://www.jeffbullas.com/">http://www.jeffbullas.com/</a>
<i>The Marketing Donut</i>	<a href="http://www.marketingdonut.co.uk/">http://www.marketingdonut.co.uk/</a>
<i>Socially Stacked</i>	<a href="http://www.sociallystacked.com/">http://www.sociallystacked.com/</a>
<i>Buffer Social</i>	<a href="https://blog.bufferapp.com/">https://blog.bufferapp.com/</a>
<i>Peg Fitzpatrick</i>	<a href="http://pegfitzpatrick.com/blog/">http://pegfitzpatrick.com/blog/</a>
<i>RazorSocial</i>	<a href="http://www.razorsocial.com/blog/">http://www.razorsocial.com/blog/</a>
<i>Rebekah Radice</i>	<a href="http://rebekahradice.com/blog/">http://rebekahradice.com/blog/</a>

<b><i>The Social Media Hat</i></b>	<a href="https://www.thesocialmediahat.com/">https://www.thesocialmediahat.com/</a>
<b><i>John Loomer</i></b>	<a href="http://www.jonloomer.com/">http://www.jonloomer.com/</a>
<b><i>Unmetric</i></b>	<a href="http://blog.unmetric.com/">http://blog.unmetric.com/</a>
<b><i>Socialmouths</i></b>	<a href="http://socialmouths.com/blog/">http://socialmouths.com/blog/</a>
<b><i>Seth Godin</i></b>	<a href="http://sethgodin.typepad.com/">http://sethgodin.typepad.com/</a>
<b><i>Pam Moore</i></b>	<a href="http://www.pammarketingnut.com/blog/">http://www.pammarketingnut.com/blog/</a>

## Blogging

<b><i>Getting Started with WordPress</i></b>	<a href="http://learn.wordpress.com/get-started/">http://learn.wordpress.com/get-started/</a>
<b><i>WordPress Blog</i></b>	<a href="http://wordpress.org/news/">http://wordpress.org/news/</a>

## Facebook

### Getting Started with Facebook Business Pages

<https://en-gb.facebook.com/business/overview>  
<https://www.facebook.com/help/364458366957655/>

<b>Facebook Page Guidelines</b>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/page_guidelines.php">https://www.facebook.com/page_guidelines.php</a>
<b>Facebook Blog</b>	<a href="http://blog.facebook.com/">http://blog.facebook.com/</a>

## Twitter

### Getting Started with Twitter

	<a href="https://support.twitter.com/articles/215585-getting-started-with-twitter#">https://support.twitter.com/articles/215585-getting-started-with-twitter#</a>
<b>Twitter Blog</b>	<a href="https://blog.twitter.com/">https://blog.twitter.com/</a>

## Pinterest

***Getting Started With Pinterest*** <http://business.pinterest.com/en/getting-started>

***Pinterest Blog*** <http://uk.blog.pinterest.com/>

***Pinterest Business Blog*** <http://business.pinterest.com/en/blog>

## YouTube

### Getting Started with YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/yt/about/en-GB/getting-started.html>

**YouTube Blog** <http://youtube-global.blogspot.co.uk/>

## LinkedIn

***LinkedIn Blog*** <http://blog.linkedin.com/>

### ***Getting Started with a LinkedIn Business Page***

<http://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/company-pages/get-started.html>

### ***Getting Started With a LinkedIn Personal Profile***

<http://www.marketingdonut.co.uk/marketing/internet-marketing/social-media-and-online-networking/get-started-with-linkedin>

## Instagram

***Instagram Blog*** <https://business.instagram.com/blog>

***Getting Started with Instagram*** <https://help.instagram.com/454502981253053/>

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# WHY YOU SHOULD BE ON GOOGLE MY BUSINESS

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Did you know that 70% of online searches are conducted via Google, and one out of every five of those searches is regarding a business or a place, according to Search Engine Watch? Put simply, this means that potential consumers are actively searching online for businesses just like yours. In order to get your business found as quickly and easily as possible, you need to harness the power of Google and its product offerings to ensure you put forward the best representation of your business. If you do not have your small business listed on Google My Business, that job needs to be put on the top of your 'To Do' list!

## **What is Google My Business?**

Google my business is a free, easy-to-set-up online platform that Google provides to allow small business owners to manage their presence on Google's search engine, increase their online visibility and to help people find and review businesses in their local area. Simply put, it is the most comprehensive and easily accessible business directory ever!

On your Google My Business page you can display important information about your business, such as the opening/closing times, contact phone number, your website link, and more advanced options such as your products, services and upcoming events.

When someone searches for a business on Google, information such as the business phone number, address, reviews and website are pulled from the businesses' Google My Business page and displayed in the results.

Whenever someone is searching for something which Google determines to have local intent, such as 'restaurant in Chorley', links to several Google My Business listings will be displayed below a map of the local area. When clicking on a business's Google My Business listing, the following information is displayed.

- The business's name, address and phone number
- The business's location on a map.
- The business's opening hours.
- A link to the business's website.
- Photos related to the business.
- Reviews of the business left by previous customers which give the business a rating out of 5.

Creating a listing is free and should be regarded as a necessity by all businesses. Even If your business is an online business with no physical shop then you should still consider having a Google My Business page as there are plenty of benefits!

To claim your Google My Business page, you must have a business that has either a physical storefront or that travels to customers at their locations as you will need to use an address when setting up and verifying your account. For those that work from home or are online only businesses for example, there is a way around this. You can simply add your home personal address for the purpose of getting set up and verified, but then choose not to display this address publicly.

1. To do this, make sure you are logged in to Google My Business and head to the 'info' tab.
2. Find your address and click the pencil icon next to it, which will take you to the edit screen.
3. You will see a 'clear address' button towards the bottom of the pop-up. Click it and it will successfully remove your address from displaying on your listing.

### **Why Every Small Business Should Be Using Google My Business**

People go online multiple times a day to find information to make their lives easier, after all how many times do you hear —“just Google it!.” Whether through a search result or a maps query, over five billion searches are made each day through Google which makes improving how your business appears on Google a crucial element in your business online presence. Here are four benefits of having a Google My Business listing;

#### **It's Free and Easy to Set Up**

Creating a GMB listing has many benefits, but at a most basic level, listings provide key information quickly for searchers which can help them to find a business, decide on a visit and with the handy maps section to help with directions – it all makes it more likely that searchers will visit your store/place of business. Moreover, even creating a relatively basic listing can help to improve your search presence, so it's well worth setting one up.

TOP TIP! Your Google My Business page determines how your information will show on Google's results. Since you are in complete control of this information, you have to make sure that every detail of your business is listed accurately and you don't miss any critical steps to showcase your business!

#### **Gain Trust and Credibility With Customers**

With the overwhelming popularity of Google, web users searching for businesses on the platform are now accustomed to seeing these GMB profiles and as such, having one yourself will add a degree of credibility to your business. Google itself says that businesses that verify their information with Google My Business are twice as likely to be considered reputable by consumers.

Beyond this, the listing looks professional, provides key information that helps people to decide whether you're a credible business or not and of course the unbiased rating/review system used for Google My Business listings makes reviews on there more trustworthy than those on a business website. Google makes it very difficult for unscrupulous businesses to attain good rankings in their local search results so reviews on here are held in higher esteem than those directly of a business website for example that may

not be genuine. Set your sights on achieving as many genuine, positive reviews on Google My Business as;

- Reviews are a ranking factor that Google uses to determine where you should be placed on search results.
- Your reviews will showcase your positive business efforts and people are way more likely to visit a business with multiple positive reviews.
- According to Moz's Local Search Ranking Factors Survey, online reviews are thought to make up 10% of how Google and other search engines decide to rank search results.

### **Better Prominence in Search Results**

Google My Business listings are displayed above the standard search results which means the businesses shown there have a greater presence and get more attention. This of course also has the added benefit of you having two 1st page listings instead of one. It's important to note that whilst having a listing guarantees that you'll appear front and centre in brand name searches, this prominent position isn't automatic and guaranteed for general 'business type' results. For example, my business will appear when someone searches for 'Scarlett Darbyshire' on Google, but I may not appear so prominently if the search made was 'Social Media Marketing Consultant in Lancashire.' Getting into the 'top results' for a generic business search is the aim for all businesses but achieving this can depend on the level of competition in your local area for your business type and factors such as review scores.

TOP TIP! In an effort to prevent spam, Google will not allow you to enter a P.O. Box as your address because this is not considered a physical location. If you don't have a storefront you can verify your business by using your home address. Don't be put off by this fearing your privacy – Google will not make your home address public, as long as you mark that you do not receive customers at this address.

### **Find Insights into Customer Behaviour**

Google provides useful insights such as how customers searched for your business, where those customers are coming from and how many people called your business directly from the phone number displayed on local search results in Search and Maps. All of which you can use to gain insights into customer behaviour.

TOP TIP! Post photos that show off what you do! Businesses that add photos to their listings receive 42% more requests for driving directions on Google Maps and 35% more clicks through to their websites than businesses that don't.



## Top Tips to Optimize Your Profile

### Showcase Your Products

For businesses with products, GMB's Product Editor allows you display your offering on the platforms. You can include information such as photos, details and pricing. You should fill this information out as fully as you can as it allows Google to better understand your business as well as allowing customers to get a better idea of products offered and interact more with your business.

### Use the Special Attributes

Depending on the category you have chosen for your account, there are special features that become available for you to use. Here are some of the category-specific features available:

- Hotels can display class ratings and list amenities offered
- Restaurants can upload menus, showcase popular dishes, and add a link for online orders and reservations
- Healthcare-related businesses can inform customers whether your business offers online care, and they can schedule and receive online care.
- Service-oriented businesses can display a service menu and add a booking button
- Black-owned and women-led businesses can highlight this information on their profile.

You can also add general attributes to your profile to share useful information such as is your business is wheelchair accessible, offers free Wi-Fi, or outdoor seating.

If you think your business should have access to one of these features, but you don't see them, then you have probably chosen the wrong category. You can choose up to 10 categories for your business.

#### *How to add or edit attributes*

- From your account dashboard, click Info.
- Find Add Attributes and select Edit. Search for the attribute you want to add or scroll through the available options.
- Click Apply.

### Include Keywords

Just like with your website SEO, Google trawls through your content to better understand your business and place in search results. It is very important that you include important keywords and search phrases to your business listing and each time you share a post to your audience.

### Allow Customers to Message You

Through the Google My business app you can enable Message button so customers will be able to message your business. To do so, tap Customers, then Messages, then Turn on through the app. For maximum performance and visibility through the GMB listing, it is very important to message the user back quickly. Certainly, within 24 hours but much faster than that is better. To help with your

responsiveness. you can set messages to have customized automated responses to welcome customers for incoming messages.

### **Post Regularly and Consistently**

To keep your profile updated, to drive sales and encourage visits to your store, you can easily create posts for your business to inform customers of updates, new products, offers, and events.

*How to create a post on Google:*

- Open the Google My Business app and click on the plus button on the bottom right hand of the screen.
- Choose the type of post you would like to create from the options given.
- Add a good quality photo along with a caption that is concise and informative.
- Click Preview to double check formatting and spelling. If you need to make an edit, click the back arrow.
- When you are ready, click Publish.

Posts can be sent on-the-go from either a phone, tablet, or a computer and easily let you engage with your audience and keep your presence fresh on Google. The best posts include visuals and links (ensure they point to sites that are trusted) and are free of spelling errors, gibberish or useless information.

### **Encourage Customers to Leave Reviews**

Reviews not only improve your Google ranking, but they also give you social proof. A good review can be the deciding factor that finally makes a prospective customer buy your product or service.

Google offers businesses access to a free marketing kit with stickers, social posts, and printable posters that you should take advantage of. You need to do your bit by actively asking your customers for a review. The best time to ask is after providing a great experience. Whether they bought in store or online, consider putting a slip in with your packaging or adding a note on your receipt that reminds them to leave you a review.

Once you start to receive reviews, you should also show current and prospective customers that you value their feedback by responding to those reviews. Stay respective and professional. A simple personalised thank you to positive reviews will be fine and do not ignore any negative reviews, be honest accept what went wrong and offer an apology when it is warranted.

### **Regularly Check Your Insights**

Your Google My Business profile provides you with access to lots of extremely useful insights. These insights go above and beyond showing you key areas such as how many customers search for you, call your business, ask for directions, click on your photos, and more. By regularly studying these insights you can discover what keywords, photos, and actions are most popular with viewers which can help you better your profile and content.

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# MONTHLY CLEAN UP AND REFRESH OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS - CHECKLIST

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In order to keep your social media platforms fresh, relevant and effective there are several monthly maintenance jobs you need to complete. By regularly monitoring your pages and making it a habit to assess your settings, competitors and other important aspects, you ensure that your social media marketing is highly effective helping you to maximise your ROI.

- ✓ **Update Your Bios and Descriptions:** Are your descriptions on your platforms relevant and up to date? Ensure you regularly update your bios with and new key information, links, messages or any other important information such as a new email address or website link.
- ✓ **Update Your Logos, Cover Images, Banners and Backgrounds:** Are your logos and other visual identity covers up to date and relevant? By updating your social media logo and cover images to represent the current trends, seasons and any other important info like offers, sales and promotions, you keep your pages feeling fresh for your fans and followers.
- ✓ **Organise your Followings:** If you follow a lot of blogs or have a large Twitter following it is worthwhile getting organised with up-to-date lists that contain the content and people you want to be able to find easily. On Twitter itself you can create lists based on interests or organise the updates from important users and influencers, if you already utilise this feature then ensure it is kept up to date and organised. If you do not use Twitter lists, then it's worthwhile that you start.
- ✓ **Assess your Competitors Pages:** Regularly examining what your competitors are doing on their social media platforms can reveal a lot of useful information to help you inform your own strategy. Explore keys are such as which social media platforms they are using, how engaged their fans are, what types of content they share, which types of content draw the most engagement, are they doing anything new? And are they using any social media platforms that you are not?

- ✓ **Review Page Permissions and Privacy Settings:** It is important for security purposes that you review who has access to your social media pages, both people and third-party applications and update these permissions accordingly. Ideally if a person who knows your passwords has since left your business you should change all of your passwords immediately. As a general rule of thumb however you should look to update your passwords on a quarterly or every few months basis.
- ✓ **Explore New Options and Keep up With Trends and Developments:** Every month you should look at any emerging trends and developments in your industry and social media platforms that you need to be aware of and that you can utilise. Regularly check to see if you are missing out on any new network features that could benefit you by checking the official websites and blogs of your social media platforms. You should also be up to date on industry trends, developments and any new emerging social media platforms by regularly reading articles and following industry influencers.
- ✓ **Revisit and Assess Goals:** Key to your success is meeting your social media goals and objectives so ensure you regularly take a look at your analytics across your social media platforms to ensure you are meeting all aspects of them. As time progresses you may find your strategy and goals need to change or adapt therefore it is important to regularly assess your goals and ensure they are still the ones you want to aim for.

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# 83 ENGAGING IDEAS FOR YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

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Never be stuck for social media content ideas again with this list of 83 ideas guaranteed to keep you inspired for a long time!

- **Explain How You do Something:** if you have a unique way you make your product, handle complaints or welcome new customers then share it and describe your process.
- **Staff Profiles:** help to humanise your brand by sharing staff photos and information.
- **Personal Stories:** People love to see the humans behind the brand and read what they get up to, so if you have just graduated from university or you have just had a baby and you are happy to tell your audience, then share your stories.
- **Show Your Charity/Community Work:** If your business supports a charity or gives back to the local community, document and share what you do.
- **Join or Create a Debate:** if you feel you can add value to a relevant debate then join in, likewise if you want to hear someone's opinions then create a debate yourself.
- **Create a Regular Feature:** regular features are a great way of drawing readers back to your page. Your regular feature can be anything from a 'customer of the week' spotlight to a monthly collection of useful online articles that will benefit your audience.
- **Useful Tips and Advice:** Providing useful and informative tips and advice always generates interest.
- **Create a How-To:** how-to posts are great for informing your audience and promoting your products uses. If there is more than one way to use your product or service? Or a way of using your product that no one has thought of? Then describe it in a how-to post.
- **Industry Experts or Celebrity Interviews:** If you have an industry expert that is of interest to your customers or are lucky enough to have celebrity contacts then a quick and easy interview post with them can generate a lot of interest.
- **Keyword Research:** Use Google Analytics or similar tools to see what search terms bring prospects to your site. You can then form your next post around those keywords.
- **Write a Series:** if you would like to go into great depth into a topic or teach your audience something complicated, then break the topic into several parts.
- **Conduct Market Research:** conduct market research and get your customers involved to share their opinions on your new product/ service etc.
- **Create a Contest:** Contests always generate engagement and interest just be sure to make the prize relevant and worthwhile to your audience.

- **Take a Reader Poll:** if you want serious questions answering or just simply for fun, polling you audience can be a great way to gather useful information and engage your audience.
- **Create a FAQ:** compile a list of the most common questions you get asked, write the answers to them and share them.
- **Create an Award:** Giving awards such as a “best of” is guaranteed to gather attention.
- **Share your Customer Feedback:** customer testimonials can go a great way in terms of gathering attention, if you get a great testimonial then ask permission to share it.
- **Reveal Industry Secrets:** People are always drawn to information that reveals secrets they would not normally find out. Therefore, exposing secrets from your industry will be sure to get attention.
- **Tell your Story:** everybody loves to read about other people’s dreams, aspirations and challenges, so write about why and how you started your business.
- **Add your Thoughts to a Popular Post:** if you feel you can add value to a popular debate or post then join in and add your thoughts.
- **Share Relevant Breaking News:** if you know that a current event is going to interest or affect your customers or audience then share it with them.
- **Ask Questions:** is there something you want to find out or know about your customers? Then ask them and let your readers create the content.
- **Talk about Relevant Trends:** sharing relevant trends helps you convey authority within your industry.
- **Create a Podcast:** Record a quick interview with an expert, or just give a few of your own useful tips.
- **Create an Infographic:** Infographics are highly popular on social networks so create and interesting and fact filled post and it’s guaranteed to get shared.
- **Report on a Conference:** if you have visited a conference and gathered lots of useful information that your audience will find useful then share it.
- **Show Behind the Scenes:** People love to see behind the scenes as it shows them an aspect of your business that they would not normally see. Take shots of yourself and your workday, your employees, or a picture of your office or workspace.
- **Review Books and Articles:** if you have read a book or an interesting article you think your audience will find valuable and relevant, review it.
- **Review a Product or Service:** If there is a product or service that is relevant to your customers then write about it.
- **Compare Products or Services:** you could go beyond simply reviewing one product or service and compare two or more instead.
- **Post a Video:** videos gather a lot of attention if they are inspiring and provide something valuable to the viewer whether that be information or entertainment.
- **Share a Highlight:** document what the big milestones are in your business history and tell your audience about those important moments and how they changed your business.
- **Share your Passions:** telling personal stories and aspects about you help to humanize your brand and inspire your audience.
- **Share your Visions:** if your company philosophy is unique and you offer something different from your competitors then share it with your audience.

- **Share Something Inspiring:** people like to feel inspired so write about what inspires you and keeps you positive.
- **Compile a Useful Resource List:** having a resource list full of information such as good links, websites or good books related to your business, can be a very valuable resource for your customers.
- **The Story Behind One of Your Products/Services:** if there is an interesting story behind one of your products or services then share it with your audience.
- **A Day in The Life:** Day in the life posts work similarly to behind the scenes posts as they offer the reader an aspect of your business they would not normally get to see. Give customers an hour-by-hour account of a typical day at your business from the viewpoint of one of your employees.
- **Offer Something Special:** if you have a special event planned or simply want to announce a new product then make sure you write about it. For extra attention make if you want to run a giveaway along with your special announcement then only make it available to blog subscribers for example.
- **Anniversary Posts:** If you launched a product or service a year ago or had a milestone in your business then do an anniversary post a year later to describe what has changed since that event.
- **Round up The Best of Your Blog:** if you have blog posts that are buried in your archive but you know is some of your most informative and interesting work then do a round-up at the end of the year and compile your 10 favourite blog posts for example.
- **Upcoming Events Your Business is Involved in or Attending:** If you are attending an event then be sure to take photos and document what you do. Even if the event is not directly related to your business, taking photos and sharing them still has the added benefit of humanizing your brand.
- **Profiles of Businesses You Work With:** if you work with some other great businesses then give them free advertisement and tell your customers about them. The likelihood is that the other business will return the favour.
- **Make a Prediction:** share your opinion on what you think the future holds for an aspect of your industry.
- **Discuss Your Future Plans:** give readers a sneak peek at what you have planned for the future to start generating interest.
- **Share Quotes:** Whether they are funny, inspiring or motivational quotes always perform well.
- **Share Statistics or Data:** Show yourself as a cutting-edge industry resource by share new, relevant industry statistics
- **Link to a Guest Post:** Share a link to a post you contributed to another site.
- **Product Photos:** You could share a photo of brand-new product look, an employee using the product or a customer-submitted photo etc.
- **Humor:** Some lighthearted humorous memes, images, gifs or videos can go a long way towards showing the personality of your business.
- **Giveaways:** Giveaways are a great way to not only generate excitement and brand awareness, but they also act as a way to say “thank you” to your fans and brand advocates.
- **Host a Chat:** Engage your community by hosting a Google + hangout, Facebook or Twitter chat.
- **General Trivia:** Share interesting industry trivia by sharing a regular ‘Did you Know’ feature.

- **Create a Free eBook:** Share your interesting knowledge for free in an eBook and be rewarded by a free and easy way to capture contact information and generate new leads.
- **Create an Events Calendar:** Encourage your readers to subscribe to your events and keep up to date with what's happening in your business.
- **Show of Your Customer Service:** Customer service through social media is quickly becoming an expectation of consumers. So, grab the chance to show off how much you care about your customers by actively responding, engaging and helping your audience with anything they need.
- **Show of Case Studies:** Show your worth and entice readers with a visual case study of your best work.
- **Ask for Reviews or Testimonials:** Build social proof by asking (nicely!) for reviews and testimonials.
- **Provide a Recommendation:** Give back and share the love by recommending a business you have worked with.
- **Celebrate Odd Holidays:** Did you know today is 'Draw a Picture of a Bird Day'? Use a tool like Days of the Year to find out what today's bizarre/wacky holiday is and if it is relevant to your business then celebrate it with your audience to generate engagement and show your personality.
- **Thank Your Fans:** Remind your fans you appreciate them by offering a simple thank you. This can go a long way to building connections with your fans. (If you really love them you can combine this thank you with a free giveaway!)
- **Post Teaser Content:** Do you have something exciting and special coming up like a new product launch? Tease your audience with small clues to boost engagement and awareness.
- **Link to a Blog Comment:** if someone has left a particularly interesting, controversial or helpful comment on your blog, post a link to it and get your fans and followers to weigh in.
- **Ask Your Fans for Content Ideas:** Generate content that your audience wants to see by asking them what they want and need.
- **Use Your Website Analytics to Find Content ideas:** Look through your analytics to find out which topics generate the most interest from your audience and make those topics the focus for your next blog post etc.
- **Hold a Q&A Session:** Give your fans the chance to ask you anything by hosting a live Q&A.
- **Recommend a Book:** if you have read a book you think your audience can benefit from, tell them about it.
- **Demos:** Demos are like a show-and-tell for your product or service and are particularly powerful when combined with user-generated content.
- **Opinions and Rants:** Controversy is one of the ways to publish viral content. Opinion pieces have the potential to be interesting and provoke a lot of interest. Take a stance on a popular belief and turn it on its head.
- **Failures and What Not to Do:** Just as successes are fun for your audience to read, outlining techniques that don't work well is also interesting—particularly when your product or service solves the challenges presented from the failed techniques.
- **Worksheets:** Worksheets are perfect for turning the actionable advice from guides into printable materials for notetaking, brainstorming, and ideation.



- **Checklists:** Checklists are a type of worksheet that helps your audience follow a step-by-step process to achieve a desired outcome.
- **Templates:** Templates may combine information from guides, worksheets, and checklists all into one type of content to walk your audience through a step-by-step process. These are great as free downloads in exchange for email addresses to help you build your email list.
- **Diagrams:** Sometimes, a complex pattern is best told in a visual way as a symbolic representation of information.
- **Photography:** Stock and personal photography can work well to complement written content. Custom-taken images for your brand are even better, showing the faces and places where you work and the humans behind the scenes at your company.
- **Memes:** When you want to show a little personality in content like a blog post, memes get the point across with a little humour.
- **Comics and Cartoons:** Not all comics or cartoons need to be funny, necessarily. Hand-drawn or even computer-generated cartoons can also help tell a step-by-step story.
- **Illustrations:** Illustrations create visual interest in your content and make for some very shareable graphics.
- **Hand-Written Notes, Sketches, and Brainstorms:** Some solo marketers may not have the luxury of a designer on hand. There are times when images of sketches, written notes, and brainstorms work well to illustrate your concepts.
- **Courses:** Courses are a type of long-form content typically delivered through emails containing exclusive content dedicated to education. These are an excellent way to grow your email list while building a community around your brand.
- **Event Replays:** Record your webinars and virtual events to provide videos of the content after the events are over. This is a great way to repurpose your hard work to help get the most bang for your buck.
- **Live-Streaming Video:** For any event, new tools like Meerkat and Periscope help marketers bring the events live to online audiences.
- **User-Generated Content:** If you do/host something like a Twitter chat, Facebook or LinkedIn Group, for example, collect the responses and publish a recap. The answers will all be advice from your own users—people from your chat.

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# FILL UP YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT CALENDAR WITH FUN INTERNATIONAL DAYS!

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A fun way to fill up your social media content calendar is to celebrate unique days of the week and year! This is just a starter for you, sign up to popular site [daysoftheyear.com](http://daysoftheyear.com) to get an accurate and comprehensive list of days your business can get involved with – direct to your inbox!

## January

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|--|
| 1. New Year's Day  |
| 2. Science Fiction Day   |
| 3. Festival of Sleep Day   |
| 4. National Trivia Day   |
| 5. National Bird Day   |
| Clean Off Your Desk Day (Second Monday of January)               |
| 6. Weigh-In Day  |
| 7. I'm Not Going to Take it Anymore Day                          |
| 8. Bubble Bath Day   |
| 9. Law Enforcement Appreciation Day                              |
| 10. Houseplant Appreciation Day                                  |
| 11. Heritage Treasures Day                                       |
| 12. Kiss a Ginger Day  |
| 13. Make Your Dream Come True Day                                |
| 14. Dress Up Your Pet Day  |
| 15. National Hat Day   |
| Get to Know Your Customers Day (Third Thursday of every quarter) |
| 16. Women's Healthy Weight Day                                   |
| 17. Ditch Your Resolution Day                                    |
| 18. Thesaurus Day  |
| 19. Popcorn Day  |
| 20. Cheese Lovers Day  |
| 21. National Hugging Day   |
| 22. Celebration of Life Day                                      |
| 23. National Pie Day   |
| 24. National Compliment Day                                      |

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|---|
| 25. Opposite Day  |
| Community Manager Appreciation Day (Every Fourth Monday of January) |
| 26. Spouse's Day  |
| 27. Chocolate Cake Day  |
| 28. Data Privacy Day  |
| 29. Puzzle Day  |
| 30. Croissant Day   |
| 31. Fun At Work Day   |

### January is also...

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|----------------------------------|
| Oatmeal Month                    |
| Brainteaser Month                |
| Celebration of Life Month        |
| Creativity Month                 |
| Get Organized Month              |
| Clean Up Your Computer Month     |
| Get A Balanced Life Month        |
| Down Syndrome Awareness Month    |
| Hobby Month                      |
| Soup Month                       |
| International Brain Teaser Month |
| Be Kind to Food Servers Month    |

## February

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|---|
| 1. Ice Cream for Breakfast Day                          |
| 1st February - 7th February is Solo Diners Eat Out Week |
| 2. Groundhog Day  |
| 3. Golden Retriever Day                                 |
| 4. World Cancer Day                                     |
| 5. World Nutella Day                                    |
| 6. Lame Duck Day  |
| 7. Send a Card to a Friend Day                          |
| 8. Opera Day  |
| 8th February - 14th February is Sleep Awareness Week    |
| 9. National Pizza Day                                   |
| 10. Clean Out Your Computer Day                         |
| 11. Inventors Day                                       |
| 12. Darwin Day  |
| 13. Madly in Love with Me Day                           |
| 14. Valentine's Day                                     |
| 15. Singles Awareness Day                               |
| 16. Innovation Day                                      |
| 17. Random Acts of Kindness Day                         |

18. Drink Wine Day
19. International Tug-Of-War-Day
20. Love Your Pet Day
21. Sticky Bun Day
22. World Thinking Day
23. Curling is Cool Day
24. Tortilla Chip Day
25. Clam Chowder Day
26. Pink Day
27. Pokémon Day
28. Chocolate Soufflé Day
29. Bachelor's Day

#### **February is also...**

Library Lovers' Month
Hot Breakfast Month
Bird-Feeding Month
Bake for Family Fun Month
Cherry Month
Vegan Cuisine Month

### **March**

1. Wedding Planning Day
2. Dr Seuss Day
3. World Wildlife Day
Day of Unplugging (First Friday of March)
National Employee Appreciation Day (First Friday of March)
4. National Grammar Day
5. National Pancake Day
6. Day of Unplugging
7. National Be Heard Day
8. International Women's Day
9. Barbie Day
National Napping Day (Monday After March Daylight Savings)
10. Organize Your Home Office Day
11. World Plumbing Day
12. Kidney Day
13. Jewel Day
14. Pi Day
World Sleep Day (Friday Before March Equinox)
15. True Confessions Day
16. National Freedom of Information Day
17. St. Patrick's Day

18. Awkward Moments Day
19. National Let's Laugh Day
20. International Day of Happiness
20. World Storytelling Day
21. World Poetry Day
22. World Water Day
23. National Puppy Day
24. Flatmate's Day
25. Waffle Day
26. Purple Day
27. International Whiskey Day
28. Earth Hour Day
29. Neighbour Day
30. Doctors Day
31. Crayola Crayon Day

#### **March is also...**

Credit Education Month
Social Work Month
Craft Month
Endometriosis Awareness Month
Women's History Month
Nutrition Month
Multiple Sclerosis Month

## **April**

1. April Fool's Day
2. World Autism Awareness Day
National Walking Day (First Wednesday in April)
3. Walk To Work Day
4. DIY Day
5. Geologist's Day
6. New Beer's Eve
7. World Health Day
Equal Pay Day (Second Tuesday in April)
8. Zoo Lovers Day
9. Unicorn Day
10. National Siblings Day
11. National Pet Day
12. Walk on Your Wild Side Day
13. Scrabble Day
14. Equal Pay Day

15. ASL Day
16. National Wear Your Pajamas to Work Day
Get to Know Your Customers Day (First Thursday of Each Quarter)
National High-Five Day (Third Thursday in April)
17. Day of Silence
18. Husband Appreciation Day
19. Bicycle Day
20. National Look-Alike Day
21. Library Workers Day
22. Earth Day
23. World Book Day
24. Pig in A Blanket Day
25. Veterinary Day
26. Get Organized Day
27. Tell a Story Day
28. Pay It Forward Day
29. International Dance Day
30. National Honesty Day
30. National Adopt a Shelter Pet Day

#### **April is also...**

Autism Awareness Month
Active Dog Month
Month of the Military Child
Parkinson's Awareness Month
Garden Month
Straw Hat Month
Decorating Month
Jazz Appreciation Month
Couple Appreciation Month
Poetry Month
Summer Tire Changeover Month
Adopt A Ferret Month

## **May**

1. May Day
1. International Workers Day
World Password Day (First Thursday of May)
Thank a Teacher Day (First Tuesday of May)
Space Day (First Friday of May)
2. Naked Gardening Day
3. World Laughter Day

4. Star Wars Day #Maythe4thBeWithYou
4. International Firefighters Day
5. Teacher Appreciation Day
6. No Diet Day
7. Thank a Teacher Day
National Receptionist Day (Second Wednesday in May)
8. World Donkey Day
9. Fair Trade Day
10. Mother Ocean Day
11. Eat What You Want Day
12. National Limerick Day
12. National Nurses Day
13. Numeracy Day
14. Chicken Dance DAY
15. International Day of Families
16. Love a Tree Day
National Bike to Work Day (Third Friday of May)
Endangered Species Day (Third Friday of May)
17. Work from Home Day
18. Visit Your Relatives Day
19. May Ray Day
20. World Bee Day
21. National Memo Day
22. Sherlock Holmes Day
23. World Product Day
24. National Scavenger Hunt Day
25. Wine Day
26. Dracula Day
27. Sunscreen Day
28. Hamburger Day
29. Biscuit Day
30. Water a Flower Day
31. Web Designer Day

**May is also...**

Military Appreciation Month
Lupus Awareness Month
Cystic Fibrosis Awareness Month
Barbecue Month
Prader-Willi Syndrome Awareness Month
Photo Month
Asian Pacific Heritage Month
Golf Month
Hamburger Month
Get Caught Reading Month

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Lyme Disease Awareness Month

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Bike Month

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Deck Safety Month

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## June

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1. Global Day of Parents

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1. International Children's Day

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National Cancer Survivor's Day (First Sunday in June)

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Donut Day (First Friday of June)

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2. Rocky Road Day

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Leave the Office Early Day (2<sup>nd</sup> June or Nearest Weekday)

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3. Running Day

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4. Hug Your Cat Day

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5. World Environment Day

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6. Gardening Exercise Day

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7. Cancer Survivors Day

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8. World Oceans Day

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8. Best Friends Day

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9. Rosé Day

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10. Iced Tea Day

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11. German Chocolate Cake Day

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12. Superman Day

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13. World Gin Day

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14. World Blood Donor Day

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15. Nature Photography Day

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16. Fresh Veggies Day

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17. Eat Your Vegetables Day

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18. International Picnic Day

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19. Martini Day

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Take Your Dog to Work Day (First Friday After June 19th)

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20. World Productivity Day

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21. National Selfie Day

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21. World Music Day

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21. International Yoga Day

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22. Positive Media Day

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23. Let it Go Day

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24. Upcycling Day

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25. Global Beatles Day

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26. Beauticians Day

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27. National Sunglasses Day

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National Handshake Day (Last Thursday of June)

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28. Log Cabin Day

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29. International Day of Mud

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30. Social Media Day

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**June is also...**

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Dairy Month

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Guitars on The Beach

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Iced Tea Month

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Soul Food Month

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Country Cooking Month

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Great Outdoors Month

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Candy Month

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International Mud Month

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Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Month

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Audiobook Month

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Care for Your Grandparents Month

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Camping Month

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Pride month

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## July

1. Joke Day: #InternationalJokeDay

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2. World UFO Day

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3. Plastic Bag Free Day

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4. Independence Day (United States)

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5. Bikini Day

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6. International Kissing Day

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7. World Chocolate Day

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8. Math 2.0 Day

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9. Sugar Cookie Day

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10. Pina Colada Day

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11. Cheer Up the Lonely Day

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12. Malala Day

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13. French Fries Day

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14. Shark Awareness Day

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15. Give Something Away Day

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16. World Snake Day

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17. World Emoji Day

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18. Nelson Mandela International Day

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18. Get to Know Your Customers Day (Third Thursday of Each Quarter)

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19. Daquiri Day

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20. Moon Day

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21. Junk Food Day

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22. Hot Dog Day

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23. Gorgeous Grandma Day

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|---------------------------------------|
| 24. Drive-Thru Day                    |
| 25. Wine and Cheese Day               |
| 26. Aunt and Uncle Day                |
| 27. Norfolk Day                       |
| 28. Milk Chocolate Day                |
| 29. International Tiger Day           |
| 30. International Day of Friendship   |
| 31. Uncommon Instrument Awareness Day |
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**July is also...**

Horseradish Month
Independent Retailer Month
Cell Phone Courtesy Month
Picnic Month
Sarcoma Awareness Month
World Watercolor Month
Bank Account Bonus Month
Plastic Free July
Ice Cream Month

**August**

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|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Respect for Parents Day          |
| 2. National Coloring Book Day       |
| 3. White Wine Day                   |
| 4. Sisters Day                      |
| 5. Underwear Day                    |
| 6. Fresh Breath Day                 |
| 7. Professional Speakers Day        |
| 8. International Cat Day            |
| 9. National Book Lovers Day         |
| 10. National Lazy Day               |
| 11. National Sons and Daughters Day |
| 12. International Youth Day         |
| 12. Middle Child Day                |
| 13. International Lefthanders Day   |
| 14. Tattoo Removal Day              |
| 15. National Relaxation Day         |
| 16. National Tell a Joke Day        |
| 17. Break the Monotony Day          |
| 18. Serendipity Day                 |
| 19. World Photo Day                 |
| 19. World Humanitarian Day          |
| 20. World Mosquito Day              |

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|------------------------------------|
| 21. Senior Citizens Day            |
| 22. Be an Angel Day                |
| 23. Sponge Cake Day                |
| 24. Knife Day                      |
| 25. Kiss and Make Up Day           |
| 26. National Dog Day               |
| 26. National Women's Equality Day  |
| 27. Just Because Day               |
| 28. Rainbow Bridge Remembrance Day |
| 29. Individual Rights Day          |
| 30. Grief Awareness Day            |
| 31. Overdose Awareness Day         |
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**August is also...**

Fishing Month
Romance Awareness Month
Peach Month
Water Quality Month
Happiness Happens Month
Anti-Frizz Month

## September

Beard Day (First Saturday of September)

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|---|
| 1. Ginger Cat Appreciation Day                      |
| 2. V-J Day  |
| 3. Skyscraper Day                                   |
| 4. National Wildlife Day                            |
| 5. International Day of Charity                     |
| 6. Read a Book Day                                  |
| 7. Beard Day  |
| 8. International Literacy Day                       |
| 9. Teddy Bear Day                                   |
| 10. TV Dinner Day                                   |
| 11. National Day of Service and Remembrance #911Day |
| 12. National Day of Encouragement                   |
| 12. National Video Games Day                        |
| 13. Supernatural Day                                |
| 14. Gobstopper Day                                  |
| 15. World Afro Day                                  |
| 16. Working Parents Day                             |
| 17. Locate an Old Friend Day                        |
| 18. Cheeseburger Day                                |
| 19. Talk Like a Pirate Day                          |

20. Tradesman Day
21. International Day of Peace
22. Car-Free Day
22. Hobbit Day
National Women's Health and Fitness Day (Last Wednesday of September)
23. Celebrate Bisexuality Day
24. Lash Stylists' Day
25. Fitness Day
26. Human Resource Professional Day
27. World Tourism Day
28. National Good Neighbor Day
29. World Heart Day
30. International Podcast Day

### September is also...

Chicken Month
Chiari Awareness Month
Honey Month
Sourdough September
Happy Cat Month
Friendship Month
Hunger Action Month
Childhood Cancer Awareness Month
Sewing Month
Shake Month
Mushroom Month
Suicide Prevention Month
Library Card Sign-up Month
Pulmonary Fibrosis Awareness Month
Preparedness Month
Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month
Piano Month
Read A New Book Month

## October

1. International Coffee Day
1. World Vegetarian Day
2. Name Your Car Day
3. National Techies Day
4. World Animal Day
4. National Taco Day
4. World Smile Day
5. World Teachers Day

6. Mad Hatter Day
7. World Habitat Day
8. International Podiatry Day
9. Beer and Pizza Day
10. World Mental Health Day
10. World Sight Day
11. International Day of the Girl
12. Pulled Pork Day
13. National Train Your Brain Day
14. National Dessert Day
15. Math's Day
16. World Food Day
16. Bosses Day
Get to Know Your Customers Day (Third Thursday of Each Quarter)
17. Get Smart About Credit Day
18. Chocolate Cupcake Day
19. Evaluate Your Life Day
20. World Statistics Day
21. Reptile Awareness Day
22. Nut Day
23. Event Organizers Day
24. United Nations Day
25. Greasy Foods Day
26. Make a Difference Day
27. Mother-in-Law Day
28. Animation Day
29. Internet Day
30. Checklist Day
31. Halloween

#### **October is also...**

Fire Prevention Month
Emotional Intelligence Awareness Month
SUDEP Action Month
Fair Trade Month
Breast Cancer Awareness Month
Computer Learning Month
Dyslexia Awareness Month
Family History Month
Black Cat Awareness Month
Mental Health Month
Cyber Security Awareness Month
ADHD Awareness Month
Pizza Month

## November

1. World Vegan Day

1. National Authors Day

1. National Cook for Your Pets Day

2. Dynamic Harmlessness Day

3. National Sandwich Day

4. National Candy Day

National Stress Awareness Day (First Wednesday in November)

5. Love Your Red Hair Day

6. Nachos Day

7. Men Make Dinner Day

8. National Cappuccino Day

9. World Freedom Day

10. Forget-me-not Day

11. Veterans Day

12. Chicken Soup for The Soul Day

13. World Kindness Day

14. World Diabetes Day

15. Clean Out Your Refrigerator Day

16. International Day for Tolerance

17. International Students Day

18. Adoption Day

19. International Men's Day

National Entrepreneurs Day (Third Tuesday in November)

20. Universal Children's Day

21. World Hello Day

22. Go for a Ride Day

23. Espresso Day

24. Sardines Day

25. Shopping Reminder Day

26. National Cake Day

27. Jukebox Day

28. French Toast Day

29. National Day of Listening

30. Computer Security Day

30. Small Business Saturday

### November is also...

Peanut Butter Lovers' Month

Pomegranate Month

Manatee Awareness Month

Native American Heritage Month

Epilepsy Awareness Month

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World Vegan Month

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Movember

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Adoption Month

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Novel Writing Month

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## December

Cyber Monday (Monday After Thanksgiving)

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1. Walt Disney Day
  2. Fritters Day
  3. Make A Gift Day
  3. International Day of Persons with Disabilities
  4. National Cookie Day
  5. World Soil Day
  6. Microwave Oven Day
  7. Cotton Candy Day
  8. Brownie Day
  8. Pretend to Be a Time Traveler Day
  9. Christmas Card Day
  10. Human Rights Day
  11. Mountain Day
  12. Poinsettia Day
  13. Hot Cocoa Day
  14. Monkey Day
  15. International Tea Day
  16. Chocolate Covered Anything Day
  17. Maple Syrup Day
  18. Bake Cookies Day
  19. Look for an Evergreen Day
  20. Ugly Christmas Sweater Day
  21. Crossword Puzzle Day
  22. Forefathers' Day
  23. Roots Day
  24. Eggnog Day
  25. Pumpkin Pie Day
  26. Candy Cane Day
  27. Visit the Zoo Day
  28. Card Playing Day
  29. Tick Tock Day
  30. Bacon Day
  31. Champagne Day
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**December is also...**

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Tie Month

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Human Rights Month

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Write a Business Plan Month

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Operation Santa Paws

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Food Service Safety Month

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Pear Month



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# HOW TO BEST INCORPORATE SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS ON YOUR WEBSITE

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There is no one-size-fits all approach to integrating social media into your website: however, a combination of the following strategies are sure fire ways for any ecommerce brand to really start leveraging the power of the social sphere.

## Homepage Feeds

Homepage social feeds represent an incredibly powerful means of bringing your product to life on-site. Such feeds can help your site feel more human and less like a sales pitch. If you decide to integrate a social feed into your website, keep in mind that you need to ensure that your feed only contains high-quality images and content worthy of your homepage versus unrelated selfies or advertisements. Feeds are a form of social proof, arguably the most important psychological trigger when it comes to drawing in new customers.

## Social Buttons

Social buttons are an absolute must do for any brand, this is especially true in today's world where customers are spending the bulk of their time on Facebook versus on-site, it's incredibly important that you make following your business via social a one-click process versus forcing followers to try and find you. You can also use social media buttons on your website to increase sales: such buttons can promote your brand's social media channels as a way for visitors to hear about contests or promotions you may be running. Regardless of where you place your buttons, you should keep the following in mind before rolling them out:

- Make sure that your buttons mesh with your site's layout and colour scheme.
- Only highlight the social platforms that you're active on: if you're only active on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, for example, don't bother linking to your dead Pinterest page.

## Hashtags

There is perhaps no easier way to encourage social sharing than by creating a hashtag. Not unlike social buttons, hashtags can be implemented throughout your brand's visual content to provide customers

with a hub of discussion and sharing for your brand and its products. Beyond coming up with something unique, keep the following in mind as well:

- Keep your hashtag short and sweet (the ideal hashtag length is said to be under 11 characters)
- Be prepared to curate your hashtag in order to avoid spam or potentially irrelevant images
- Pick something that you can use for the long-haul: the more you use your hashtag throughout your marketing, the more likely it is to catch on.

## **Product Pages**

Social media represents the modern word of mouth: buyers want to show off and share to others about their purchases. To feed into your customers' needs to share, ensure that you have social sharing enabled on your product pages. Be careful however as it's crucial that the social buttons on your product pages should not interrupt the buying process, but rather provide a way for customers to receive one-click feedback on their next purchase. Keep the following principles in mind as a means of optimizing your products for shares:

- Do not use the same social buttons on your homepage and product pages: your product buttons should be smaller and stylized differently.
- Only offer sharing to the social networks where it makes sense: Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest are much better than somewhere such as LinkedIn.
- Make sure that your plugin captures your product's image and description appropriately as it's shared
- Don't forget about the importance of your customers' experience once they've landed. Give them a chance to share their experience in the buying process: you may be surprised at how many of them are more than happy to sing your praises.

## **Social Sign Ins**

Did you know that 73% of users prefer to log in to a site with social login, as opposed to providing an email address and creating a new account? Improve your website visitors' experience with social login and increase your website registration conversions and retention. The benefit of social sign-ins is two-fold: visitors can browse your site without the annoyance of creating a new account and they can comment on your blog with ease.

## **Include Share Buttons**

If you sell a product or run a full-fledged eCommerce site and you haven't added share buttons to your product pages, you are missing out on a whole host of potential social impressions. Share buttons should enable website-goers to seamlessly share or recommend a product. Two broad tools that can help with this are AddThis and ShareThis. Both provide efficient and easy-to-use solutions for social media sharing across eCommerce sites with the added benefit of analytics to see how the content is getting shared.

## **Social Proof**

With 79% of consumers trusting social proof as much as personal recommendations, it's important you integrate the proper social widgets on your website to increase sales and website conversions. One way to do this is to use one of Facebook's social widgets, such as the "Like Box". This feature shows your visitors that you're a credible source, their friends also like your Facebook page, and that you're a legitimate product or brand. As an added bonus you'll also be able to increase your Facebook likes with this social media integration.

## **Making Social Part of the Retail Experience**

There are many other ways to integrate social media to improve conversions, streamline customer services and drive repeat business and referrals.

- Improve your post-purchase page with a range of social cues (i.e., Share your purchase) to enhance the customer experience, and to spread the word about your business.
- Add a simple sharing section which allows a user to send a tweet or a Facebook status with a link to the product they just bought.
- The post-purchase page can also include quick links to your social media channels, email newsletter and links to access customer services too. This is also the place, as well as in order communications, to share any referral discounts you offer for customers who share with their friends.

## **Reviews and Ratings**

Social customer service is just as important as other functions like contact forms, call centres and live chat, so make sure you offer a good service that customers can access. Reviews help reassure customers, improve SEO and encourage repeat business. Linking social sign-in to your reviews set up will more than likely lead to more reviews from customers, as it just makes everything easier and more streamline. Make your social customer service easy and obvious to access by displaying it prominently on your help pages.

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# POWERFUL CALL TO ACTION PHRASES YOU NEED TO USE IN YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT!

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Having thousands Facebook Likes or Instagram followers is great, but it doesn't mean anything if those followers never take any action. Whether it's a tweet, blog title or text in your ad, every word you share in an update needs to inspire people to do something beyond just reading it. Words are very powerful and for social media to be a successful addition to your marketing strategy you must learn how to right copy that converts!

## **What Does a Call-to-Action Mean?**

A call-to-action (CTA) is an image or text that prompts your visitors, leads, and customers to take action. It might be signing up for your email list, buying a product, investing in a service, or following you on social media.

## **Call-to-Action Statistics**

- Almost 90 percent of website visitors read headlines and CTA copy. Many of them do not read anything else.
- Full-screen CTAs, such as exit popups you create through Hello Bar, perform better than any other position for CTAs (up to 25 percent conversion rate).
- Colour can make a huge difference in whether or not people click on CTAs.
- More than 90% of visitors who read your headline also read your CTA copy. (Unbounce)
- Emails with a single call-to-action increased clicks 371% and sales 1617%. (WordStream)
- Adding CTAs to your Facebook page can increase click-through rate by 285%. (AdRoll)
- By forcing visitors to watch an informational video on their services before presenting a CTA, Kimberly Snyder increased conversions by 144%. (QuickSprout)
- For KISSmetrics, a CTA within a video gets 380% more clicks than their normal sidebar CTAs. (QuickSprout)

## CTA Phrases to Persuade

If your intent is to persuade people to choose your product/service, here are several phrases to try incorporating into your call to action:

- **“Try it free now” or “Start your free trial now”** Everyone loves a freebie. This CTA is good because instead of straight up asking a prospect to hand over money for your product/service, you are offering a free ‘test drive.’
- **“Join now and get...”** Here you are simply asking your audience to reply to your message to get something of value in return. It could be an e-book, a free sample, or a template, just make sure it’s relevant to your audience.
- **“Start now to get...” or “Your Journey to X Starts here” or “Start now”** infers to your prospect that they are about to begin an exciting process — with the rest of the CTA telling the user how he or she will benefit.
- **“Talk to an expert now”** This is a great CTA to use for an online chat opportunity or when you want the prospect to call. Telling your prospect that you are a team of experts, will automatically make them feel safer in your hands.
- **“Learn more about us at...”** Prospects at the top of the sales funnel are collecting information, learning about brands and your industry without knowing exactly what they want yet. Using a CTA that invites people to learn more about your business can be extremely effective at building brand awareness. When prospects decide they are ready to buy, they will have your business name at the top of their mind.
- **“Please don’t hesitate to call us”** Let your customers know you do not mind talking to them over the phone. These types of CTA’s belong on every page of your site.
- **“Order now and receive a free gift”** If you can tempt prospects with a free gift, they’re more likely to buy the original product. The free gift on offer doesn’t have to be physical, it could be a discount off a future purchase or a downloadable template for example.
- **“Get yours now”** A personable CTA subtly telling the consumer that you want him or her to have something valuable — something other people might want.
- **“Request your FREE quote today”** Giving a free quote costs nothing but time to you, but once you have the prospect communicating with you it may just turn to a sale!
- **“Click here to get free shipping”** Use this popular CTA to overcome one of the chief barriers to buying products online - shipping costs!
- **“Money-Back Guarantee offer here”** When you offer a money-back guarantee, consumers feel more confident trying out your product or service.
- **Activate X Today!** Using a CTA like this one puts the prospect in the driver’s seat and motivates them to act. These call to actions work well if you’re offering a discount on products or a free demo of your service.

## CTA Phrases to Create a Sense of Urgency

Creating a sense of urgency encourages customers to act now instead of holding off making the purchase. Here is some effective call to action phrases that you should consider using as the sooner you can get people to take action, the better!

- **"Download here immediately."** Or **"Download here right now"** Strong adjectives promote urgency and encourage click-throughs.
- **"Act quickly or you might lose it"** Loss-aversion is a common psychological principle that is proven to work! Get the point across that if they do not act now, they might lose something valuable.
- **"Reserve your spot now"** Same principle as above! Tell your prospects that if they do not sign up and reserve their spots, they run the risk of leaving it too late.
- **"Order now while there's still time!"** Urgency is often a key element in effective call-to-action phrases. Subtly pressure consumers into acting now rather than waiting until the opportunity passes them by.
- **"In a hurry? Call..."** Call-to-action phrases like this one let the consumer know that you're willing to respond to their needs right away. A perfect CTA to use if you offer out-of-hours or emergency services.
- **"It's very important that you respond promptly"** With this CTA you are telling the prospect that if they don't respond right away then they might lose out on something good.
- **"Offer expires very soon"** A powerful, snappy CTA that clearly states there is an offer on the table, but if you don't snap it up, you'll miss out.
- **"For a short time only"** This CTA is popular during sales or clearances. It is clearly stating that here is a chance to buy a limited-edition product, take advantage of a big discount, or get some other benefit. But only if you act now.
- **"Limited availability"** a great CTA as it creates urgency and infers your product is highly popular. A win-win for you as it serves as a form of social proof as well as an incentive to act quickly.
- **"Expires at midnight tonight"** It gives a definite end point to the sale, so your prospects know they must act quickly as the clock is ticking.

## CTA Phrases to Imply Exclusivity

A very effective way to make people act is to imply exclusivity with whatever you're offering. Try these phrases out to get people taking action and jumping at the chance to be a part of your product or service to not get left out of the group.

- **“I invite you to...”** Everyone needs to feel wanted and special —foster that sense of belonging by giving the impression that you are personally inviting your prospect to do what you want.
- **“Join X Other [Category] as Subscribers to My Email List”** A great CTA for social proof. This CTA comes in many forms for example “Become one of the X people who subscribe to my emails.” Or “Join the club! Over X request my emails. You could, too!”
- **“Request an invitation”**
- **“Members Only”**
- **“Only available to X”**
- **“Pre-register/Pre-order”**
- **“Exclusive access”**

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# USEFUL TOOLS AND APPS TO HELP YOU MARKET SMART

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Updating Facebook, creating images for Pinterest, posting a stream of Tweets and or crafting your weekly blog post – all these tasks can easily eat away at your day until there is little or no time for anything else. Those with the budget can hire a dedicated social media manager to do all this for them, but for a cash-strapped start-up with no budget for a freelancer, it can feel like a struggle to get your marketing successfully off the ground. Be thankful therefore, that there are a huge variety of great tools available that are all specifically designed to address these issues. Utilising the readily available tools to help you manage your social media presence will make the whole process significantly more streamline and free up your day for other important tasks to growing your business.

- **Canva**

Visual content is vital in your social media marketing. Turn to Canva to help you easily produce high-quality, eye-catching mages for free or if you have a budget, gain access to thousands of graphics and photos. They offer numerous templates that help your images look like a great designer has done them (but in the fraction of the time and cost!).

- **Buffer**

Buffer makes allows you to create a posting schedule for your Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Pinterest and Google+ pages all in one place, which makes posting your social-media content across multiple social media accounts is a whole lot easier.

- **Brand24**

Brand24 delivers real-time information on what has been said as well as what is going on with your competition. This continual insight not only saves you having to search around for what people are saying about your brand, but it will help you effectively respond to positive and negative comments across your social-media platforms, so you can stay engaged with your audience and utilise any potential sales opportunities.

- **Cyfe**

Cyfe is a cloud-based service that allows you easily monitor and share all your vital business data from one single location in real-time. It delivers detailed reports related to SEO, Google



Analytics, AdWords and brand mentions. Cyfe can also help with industry and competitor research as a business intelligence tool, helping to turn data and trends into actionable insights.

- ***Social Clout***

Social Clout is a social media monitoring and analytics tool, that looks at where you can make significant improvements in engagement, campaigns and keywords. It delivers reports on demographics and social-media results, providing data on multiple social-media accounts to help you track the progress and be able to note the differences in responses across platforms.

- ***AgoraPulse***

If you use Facebook and Twitter for business, this tool enhances what you can do with both social-media platforms, allowing you to manage all Social Media messages in one place, schedule and publish content. It also offers solutions for customer relationship management, applications, analytics reports, contests and more.

- ***Follower Wonk***

Follower Wonk helps you find, analyze and optimize your social-media efforts solely for Twitter. You can get richer data about your followers, where they are located, and when they tweet plus the ability to locate new influencers and optimise your own tweets.

- ***Inkybee***

This social-media tool provides a way for you to locate and connect with influencers (bloggers, social-media celebrities etc.) in your industry who can elevate your brand and help open you up to and attract more potential customers.

- ***Sendible***

A popular and powerful social-media tool, Sendible brings together all aspects of your social-media management responsibilities. From gathering all posts and comments into one dashboard for analysis, measurement and engagement. To publishing, collaboration, mobile tools and customer relationship management.

- ***Openr***

This tool lets you add a relevant, targeted promotional message to any page you share on your social-media profiles. The result is more leads and traffic while helping you learn more about your audience.

- ***Socedo***

Socedo automates the lead generation process by bringing in relevant social prospects through social media into your sales pipeline. The platform matches users' interest with your defined criteria and engages prospective customers, automatically using a customisable workflow. This tool also provides insights and analytics and insights allowing you to fine-tune the workflow in order to get better quality leads.

- ***Hooks App***

The Hooks app is an alert system to use on your iPhone allowing you to stay up to date on anything through push notifications. There are hundreds of channels, including music, weather, sports scores, weather, stock prices, shipping tracking and even a channel to let you know when a concert from a certain artist is upcoming. Think of any channel, then think of anything you want to be notified of on that channel, whether it is every time a certain person tweets or when a website is down. For example, to do a Twitter alert, just set up the app, go to Twitter search and plug in the hashtag. You will then get an alert on your phone every time someone tweets that hashtag.

- ***TwitShot***

TwitShot is a free tool that is a combination of a website, Chrome extension and iOS app that simplifies the way you find images for your tweets. With TwitShot, you can easily drop photos into tweets. Simply drop in a URL for whatever piece of content you want to tweet, and TwitShot will scrape the site and find all image options. This is much more efficient than downloading and re-uploading an image when you want to tweet.

- ***Google Trends***

Google Trends is a free service that provides you with on-demand insight into what people are searching for and whether it is increasing or decreasing as a trend. Simply type in a couple of keywords and compare their interest activity. Google Trends tracks activity on these keywords all the way back to 2004, and shows if activity is increasing or decreasing, relative to the other search term. You can do this worldwide, but or search by country and get insights into what people are searching for, see whether the trend is moving up or down and more.

- ***Firefox Web Shortcuts***

If use the Firefox web browser, there are some cool tricks you can utilise. For example, hold down Cmd+Opt+M (for Mac) or Ctrl+Shift+M (for Windows) to see how your site looks on mobile. By holding down Ctrl+Shift+Q (Windows) you can also see how your web page loads and what's slowing it down. This is great way to test and troubleshoot your website.

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# BEST PRACTICES TO MAKE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE

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Little changes equal a big difference in making your social media more accessible for people who are blind and partially sighted. The changes you make do not need to be drastic, most blind and partially sighted people are likely to have their own ways (such as magnification software or Braille displays) of making social media accessible. So, these tips are really about making a few small changes so that your posts can reach and be enjoyed by everyone.

## ***Add Image Descriptions***

Putting alternative text (alt text) on your images describes photos for people who are blind or partially sighted is very important as it allows them to build up a mental picture of what someone who is sighted is seeing. You do not need to describe every single detail of the image; a voiceover reads out your description so you certainly would not want to create a 1000-word one that's full of irrelevant information. Just pick out a few key details that accurately but succinctly paint the picture.

### **How to add image descriptions on different social media platforms:**

**Facebook:** With Facebook, you need to include a description in the text of your post. Write your post first and then tag the alt text onto the end of the post. It is common to put your image description in brackets to separate it from the rest of the post.

**Instagram:** When adding a caption to your image, click on "Advanced settings" and then select "Accessibility". You will then have the option to "Write alt text".

**Twitter:** With Twitter, you can add a separate image description to an image. To do this you will need to activate the 'Image Descriptions' feature, which you can find in "Twitter Settings", under the "Accessibility" tab. You will then actually be prompted each time you upload an image to "describe this image".

It is worth noting that Facebook and Instagram have introduced automatic alt-text, a feature that uses artificial intelligence to recognise objects within images and create a description for the image. There are two things to note on these platforms:

- Auto-generated alt-text cannot be turned off. Every image you upload will have auto-generated alt-text, making it extremely important that you check the accuracy of the alt-text and edit accordingly. Because of this, you don't add alt-text on Facebook, you edit the auto-generated alt-text.
- You can only edit alt-text on a desktop computer or iOS device.

### ***Use CamelCase in Hashtags***

Whenever you are using hashtags, always use CamelCase (capitalise the first letter of every word). Not only does this make it easier for every user to differentiate words, but it also assists screen readers in reading the hashtag for those with visual or reading disabilities. For example, #WriteYourHashtagsLikeThis instead of #WRITINGYOURHASHTAGSLIKETHIS or #likethis.

### **Don't Go Emoji-Crazy**

A screen reader software reads out a description for every single emoji which is used, so be careful with the amount of emojis you include. For example, if someone puts four heart emojis, the software will read out "heart heart heart heart" this would not be very pleasant to keep hearing, not to mention it would be very annoying if a post was flooded with emojis!

### **Videos: Do you Audio-Describe or Not?**

Videos do not need to be audio-described, as long as they are audio-led. This means that the audio must be as important as what is on screen - the video should send the same message, both audibly and visually. If it does not, try to add a description of what happens in the video as part of the caption. To make them fully accessible, videos should have subtitles where possible. There are lots of apps available which make adding subtitles to your videos easy such as Camtasia.

### **Remember That Disability Representation Matters**

Represent people with all kinds of levels of ability, including temporary disabilities like injury or limitations. This applies to all the content you share — photos, videos, written. If you are looking for an image, consider using a photo or artwork that includes disabled people. If you can, hire disabled photographers and artists who can best portray what it means to have a disability.

### **Create Trigger Warnings**

With so much violence/upsetting content shared on social media, trigger warnings allow individuals to decide whether they want to interact with posts that could cause emotional or physical distress. Use the word "TRIGGER WARNING" followed by a space before your post, will tell an individual if there will be sensitive topics addressed in the content. You never know the history of others who are reading your posts, and so you might consider warning for things like assault, violence, blood, or any number of other sensitive topics.

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# HOW TO GENERATE LEADS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

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Social media is much more than just a way to grow your brand and connect with your current customers. When done correctly, you can actually use platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram to generate real leads for your business.

## **Generating Leads With Facebook**

The changes to Facebook's algorithm have made it increasingly difficult to get organic reach and as a result, generating a significant number of leads through Facebook is usually going to mean running paid ads. Aside from using Ads, there are some tactics you can use to try and turn existing fans into leads.

### **Contests**

Contests are renowned for being highly successful on Facebook and drawing lot of attention. The only negative of this attention is the leads you get are not always the most qualified because you will have a lot of freebie seekers. But nonetheless, you should still use contests on your page as it is a good way to gather emails. Consider a tool like Shortstack to help you setup Facebook contests and collect your leads because it integrates with most major email marketing tools like MailChimp.

### **Create a Custom Tab**

Facebook lets you setup custom tabs on your Page, making it a great spot for contact forms. These forms are the perfect way to capture leads on Facebook without having to send fans to an external site. In order to get more eyes on these tabs, make sure you link to them in your posts or when you're running paid ads.

### **Treat Your Page Like a Website**

Stop looking at your Facebook Page as just a way to get Likes and start looking at it as a lead generation tool. Ensure everything that is on your Page has a purpose beyond just branding. This goes for everything from the type of content you post, what kind of ads you run and even the tabs that you set up.

## Generating Leads With Twitter

Using Twitter to generate leads is still a relatively a new thing. Before Twitter Cards and Promoted Tweets came along, a lot of businesses had no idea how to even get started with getting or tracking leads through Twitter. But these days, Twitter can be used for a lot more than just growing your audience, follow these tips to get leads.

### Use Twitter Cards

With Twitter Cards, you can attach rich photos, videos and media experiences to Tweets, helping to drive traffic to your website. Simply add a few lines of markup to your webpage, and users who Tweet links to your content will have a “Card” added to the Tweet that is visible to their followers.

The different Card types each provide a different experience.

- Summary Card: Title, description, and thumbnail.
- Summary Card with Large Image: Similar to the Summary Card, but with a prominently featured image.
- App Card: A Card with a direct download to a mobile app.
- Player Card: A Card that can display video/audio/media.

To successfully use Twitter Lead Generation Cards, you should aim to use an eye-catching image, make your copy very appealing and keep an eye on your statistics to ensure they are resonating with your audience.

### Track Brand Mentions

If you are not listening to what people are saying about your company on Twitter, you could be missing out on easy leads. It is crucial to have some sort of social media monitoring tool in place that lets you track conversations happening and never lose out on a missed opportunity.

Some examples of what you can track are:

- Mentions of your company name
- Industry related keywords
- Common misspellings of your brand name/products
- Mentions of your competitors

### Create Events

Twitter chats, Ask Me Anything (AMA) and other creative events on Twitter are useful for generating leads. The key is to make sure that you have a call-to-action for each campaign. By hosting a relevant industry related event on Twitter (not in a directly salesy way about your company), you are offering free value which will naturally encourage people to want to know more about the business hosting the event, thus translating into new enquiries and leads for you.

### Go Live

Going live is a great way to directly interact with your followers and engage with them in real-time. Live chats give you the opportunity to position your brand as an expert in the industry as you can answer

questions, gather feedback, and generate awareness about your products or services. You can also use this medium to direct participants to branded content, landing pages, and other offerings. Do not forget to maximise engagement by sending all participants a shout out for participating at the end. With Twitter's Moments, you will have this capability directly within the platform.

## **Generating Leads With LinkedIn**

LinkedIn is the top social media site for B2B leads. As it is catered toward professionals and networking, it is a natural and powerful lead generation tool.

### **Offer a Free Sample**

LinkedIn Premium gives businesses the opportunity to find highly qualified leads based on job role and other criteria, then contact them directly with InMail. What is so great for B2B companies is that it lets you go directly to the decision makers.

### **Combine LinkedIn & Inbound Marketing With LinkedIn Publishing**

Inbound marketing is highly effective, and in particular, content marketing is a hugely successful technique to employ. Get on board with LinkedIn's Publishing platform as this is the perfect place to:

- Show your expertise as a thought leader
- Offer valuable information about your industry to professionals
- Gain leads

### **Get on SlideShare**

SlideShare is a content sharing platform focused on slide decks, and they get a lot of traffic. Make sure that your SlideShare and LinkedIn accounts are connected so that your presentations are visible on your LinkedIn Profile or Company Page. To use it to gain leads you should focus on creating slide decks that are highly relevant to your target audience and always have a call-to-action whether that is inside your presentation or at the end.

## **How to Generate Leads on Instagram**

Instagram does not directly cater to marketers and advertisers like Facebook or LinkedIn but that doesn't mean that you can't use it to generate leads.

### **Respond to Comments**

Getting lots of likes on your photos is great, but if you are not keeping up with the comments people are leaving, then you're missing out. By taking the time to respond to the people that are engaging with your content shows that you care, which in turn makes people more likely to buy from you.

## **Create Unique #Hashtags**

Hashtags are almost like the new word of mouth advertising, but through social media. When you create a hashtag, you give users a new way to engage with your business. Using relevant, targeted hashtags on your posts is one of the best ways to get discovered by new audiences on Instagram. This can translate into more engagement, more followers, and more leads for your business.

You can create hashtags for several different things. For example, some of the most optimal hashtags uses include: Promotions, Events, Contests and Product Launches. Remember, before you create your Hashtag, develop your end goals and tie them to a metric to track to ensure they are a successful addition to your social media marketing strategy.

To get you started, when brainstorming a new hashtag ensure it is.

- Short and snappy
- Easy to remember
- Consistent with your brand
- Focused on one message
- Unique and not generic

## **Here are seven more ways that you can generate leads on social media:**

### **Special Offers**

Everyone loves a freebie, so consider offering giveaways on social media that includes an entry form to give you the opportunity to capture important lead data. Always try to incorporate a way for entrants to share the offer via their social channels so can they help spread the word with their community.

### **Polls and Surveys**

Your followers can provide you with a wealth of knowledge, and polls offer a unique way for people to express their opinions – which they love to do! This is a great way to get feedback on vital information such as how people are using your product, what their pain points are, and what they would like to see on in the future. For bonus points, offer incentives to increase the response rate.

### **Refer-a-Friend**

Referral campaigns are a great way to engage your followers and it might just be the nudge your customers need to recommend you to their friends and family. Create compelling offers for both the referrer and the referees such as gift card or cash incentives. There are many apps out there that can create this for you and integrate with your platforms, allowing you to easily set up a referral campaign across all your social media so you can grow your customer base fast. As every shared message will include a link that tracks the responses at every stage to the conversion event, you will be able to measure the effectiveness of the campaign.



## **Discount Codes**

Flash deals and discount codes are a great way to increase brand awareness, generate demand and a sense of urgency. Make sure you include a strong call-to-action, time constraint to compel users and assign unique codes for each social channel, so you can track which platform directed the most traffic.

## **Gated Content**

Social media is essentially a megaphone to get your content out in the world, and by developing posts that direct them to a landing page where they are prompted to fill out a form, you can generate new leads and nurture existing ones. To successfully utilize this tactic, you must ensure your posts provide content that captures the interest of your followers. Most leads take only a few seconds to decide whether they will interact or not, so keep your landing pages simple, design minimal and use images, gifs, or stats to increase interest without overwhelming your leads.

## **Paid Social Ads**

Each social platform has a unique demographic criteria that allow you to target ads so it's crucial you choose the right platform and targeting options so you're going after the audience who will find value in your content, and not wasting time and resources. When you are promoting your posts, be sure to include a strong call-to-action to get the most out of your investment and generate conversions.

## **Create Clickable Content**

Simply put, without compelling content, you will not collect leads. Everyone on social media is competing for attention, and those attention spans are shorter than ever. Images need to be sharp, copy needs to be snappy and everything must be tailored towards your end goal of generating leads. Remember, you can have the best copy in the world, but do not overlook making sure people have a place to click. So always ensure each post has a clear link and tempting call-to-action.

Here are some clickable options available across different platforms:

- Tag products in your Facebook Shop
- Swipe up on Instagram stories
- Shoppable Instagram posts and stories
- Shop the Look Pins on Pinterest
- YouTube Cards and end screens

Remember, generating social media leads takes time, it certainly is not a one-day process. The key is to experiment and always be trying new ways of promotion and exploring new channels of social media marketing to keep learning and developing what works. To ultimately increase your social media leads you should always use enticing titles within your posts that you want to share on social media platforms, experiment to find a successful strategy and work on promoting it to a targeted audience and see what your competition is doing and follow that!

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# PRIZE IDEAS FOR YOUR ONLINE GIVEAWAYS & COMPETITIONS

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Online giveaways and competitions are one of the best ways grow brand awareness, generate leads, increase sales, and grab the attention of new and existing customers. We have all seen the giveaways online that offer free all-inclusive holidays, cars or other big tickets items and there are thousands of people that enter them. A prize of such value is just not attainable for most businesses but that does not mean you cannot reap the same rewards. Here are several clever and easy-to-implement contest prize ideas for your next social media giveaway, all of which are relatively cheap for you to do.

## **Social Media Giveaway Idea - Run a Photo Contest**

Images are a powerful way to connect with your audience and photo contests are particularly effective on social because they get your entrants proactively involved. Besides offering a fun way to win a prize, you can also benefit by collecting user-generated content as your feed gets filled with highly shareable visual content. Simple is best when it comes to a photo contest, just pick an awesome prize to giveaway, and make people enter by getting people to upload a photo using your product or tie it to a seasonal theme and get people to upload photos related to the current season or holiday.

### *Ideas*

- *If you are a fitness brand you could get people to send in photos of their favourite run using your product/apparel*
- *If you are a travel brand you could get people to send photos from their holiday/travel adventure they bought through you*
- *If you are a pet product company, you could get people to send in a picture of their animal with your toy/food/treats and have your social media audience pick a winner. You could do this monthly as a pet of the month and the winner could win a hamper of your products.*

## **Social Media Giveaway Idea - Like and/or Comment to Win**

This is one of the most common online giveaway ideas due to its simplicity for you to organise and for people to enter. You can do this regularly and ask people to like the photo and follow/like your account, plus comment on something related to the photo to enter.

### *Ideas*

- *You could make them comment as a photo caption giveaway – for example share a funny photo you have of your business and ask people to 'caption this' with the funniest answer named as the winner.*
- *Choose a theme for your giveaway by tying it in with a national awareness day. For example, January is "National Soup Month," so if you are in the healthy food sector or a PT, you could give away a recipe book and the latest soup making gadget as a simple bundle giveaway.*

### **Social Media Giveaway Idea – Tag a Friend**

A referral or tag- a friend giveaway is very popular as they help you generate huge social engagement. The idea is participants tag as many of their friends on your post which helps the word about your giveaway and starts a 'snowball' of entries. It is common practice to incentivize participants to tag friends by saying they will be rewarded with extra entries for sharing your social media giveaway with other people.

### *Ideas*

- *If you are a clothing company, you could do a 'tag a friend who deserves this' giveaway to win something from your collection. For example, tag a friend who deserves this "Night-on-the-town" outfit. Or tag a couch potato friend who would love our NEW fleece dressing gown.*
- *If you own a gym you could offer a class bundle for a person and 4 friends to get fit with each other.*
- *If you own a bar/restaurant you could run a tag a couple who deserves a meal treat on us.*
- *If you run a business where people have user accounts, you could also use the referral idea to give them credit for every friend referred that signs up.*

### **Social Media Giveaway Idea - Run a Hashtag Contest**

Creating a hashtag for your social media giveaway not only increases brand visibility, but it also simplifies the entry process for participants. When creating your hashtag, use something unique to your campaign and make sure it is simple, concise, and easy to read. For instance, along with #giveaway, you might include #winitwednesday #[yourbrand]giveaway #[yourbrand]contest, your #[YourBrandTagline] or something similar. It is common to team up a hashtag giveaway with asking users to upload a photo along with it.

### *Ideas*

- *If you are a clothing brand you could offer people who work from home a makeover with #WorkFromHomeWardrobe. Users would share a pic of what they wear at home and why they deserve to win.*
- *If you are in the home/ home décor /home cleaning industry you could giveaway your product or service with the #[BrandName]HelpMyHome. Users would need to share a pic of their space that needs updating and you could pick a winner to help.*

## Social Media Giveaway Idea - Partner Up

Partnering with another business to host your giveaway is a sure-fire way to greatly increase the reach of your social media giveaway because you are now tapping into two social media audiences, and that means more potential customers. Make sure you team up with someone in your industry or a business that is complementary to your industry so you benefit from an audience that may be potential customers going forward.

### *Ideas*

- *If you are a makeup artist, you could partner up with a hairdresser in your area to giveaway a makeover.*
- *Partner with a yoga studio and give away yoga gear and 10 free classes.*
- *If you are a photography you could partner with a hotel and offer a professional photo shoot and room for a couple.*
- *If you are a hotel or B&B you could partner with a spa and give a relaxing weekend package.*
- *If you are a restaurant you could partner up with your local cinema for a "Dinner and a Movie" giveaway.*
- *If you are an influencer with products, you can get your suppliers to send you a product and combine them all together to give away a huge prize bundle.*
- *If you are in the sports industry, you could offer tickers to a football match alongside your product.*

## Social Media Giveaway Idea - Win a Free Year of Your Product/ Service

An attention-grabbing giveaway idea is to offer your product/ service free to someone for an extended period of time, such as a year or 6 months. This is not a great idea if your business sells big-ticket items, but for those with small production costs, it can be a great way to give a serious boost to your brand awareness.

### *Ideas*

- *If you own an online store, you could offer free shipping for a year*
- *If you own a gym, you could offer 6 months free membership*
- *If you are a personal trainer you could offer free personal training for 6 months. Similarly, if you are a dietician you could offer a free personalised meal plan for a month.*
- *If you are in the automotive business, you could offer 1 year free car care*
- *For a one off if you were a hotel you could offer a free upgrade to your most expensive room*
- *If you are a restaurant you could do a name our newest dessert to win free dessert for a month. Similarly, if you own a bar or a food truck, you could do a name our new [drink, snack] to win it free for a year.*
- *If you own a computer/tech business, you could offer a year's free subscription to a popular application such as Microsoft Office or Gmail.*
- *If you own a newsagents or bookshop, you could offer a year's free subscription to a magazine.*

### **Social Media Giveaway Idea - Weekend Away/ Special Experience Day**

This is a big-ticket item, but the cost can be split here easily to make it manageable if you partner up with another relevant business to do it along with you. When it comes to prizes, the bigger the better on social, and a weekend away will certainly be incredibly enticing and can help you build a huge list of leads after your contest is over.

#### *Ideas*

- *If you own a female product business, you could team up with a hotel to offer a Girls trip getaway for 4 with a product prize package.*
- *Launch on a day such as a "his and hers" package for Valentine's Day or "Just for Him/Her" for Father's/Mother's Day to give that special someone a treat. You could give a golfing trip or a day at Harrods with spending money... just use your imagination to what would suit your business.*
- *If you own a hotel or B&B you can simply do this on your own and offer a 2-Night Stay.*

### **Social Media Giveaway Idea - Bundle**

An easy way to make your prize a little more exciting is to make it into a bundle. You can create a package full of your own products, or make a hamper filled with treats from local businesses, or if you work with a range of suppliers/businesses get one product from each to create a super hamper. The added benefit of teaming up is that the businesses who have a product in your hamper would likely share your giveaway with their social media audience. This will give you lots of entrants which is great for your brand awareness.

#### *Ideas*

- *If you are a photographer, you could offer free framing of photos from a paid photo shoot or you could offer a free engagement shoot with every wedding package.*
- *If you want to do your own product package, you could offer the main item and add any accessories and complementary items that go with.*
- *You could create a Gift basket filled with items from local businesses. That could be a handmade cake, handmade jewellery, a gift card for the home décor shop.*
- *You could tie the bundle in with an awareness day such as Black Friday or Cyber Monday Product Giveaway.*

## Social Media Giveaway Idea - Gift Voucher

Gift cards are one of the most popular prize ideas because they ensure that everyone who enters your giveaway is directly interested in your brand. It is a very easy giveaway to run and also ensures that each of your entrants is a high-quality lead which can mean a better chance of sales down the line.

### *Ideas*

- *If you own a clothing brand, you could offer a wardrobe-changing gift card. Ask people to tag a friend they think deserves it.*
- *If you are in the beauty/cosmetic industry you could offer a gift card for a pre-wedding treatment – e.g., Teeth whitening for a new smile on your big day.*
- *If you are a shop or a gym, or sell products alongside a service, you could offer a £50 gift card to the products you sell at your place of business.*
- *You could offer your gift card at a time when people are looking for gift ideas such as on Father's Day or around Valentines Day.*
- *The gift voucher doesn't necessarily have to be for money off – it could be service specific such as a Free couple's massage for Valentine's Day if you own a spa.*

## TOP TIPS

It can be difficult to turn social media engagement into sales, but a simple and effect way of helping you along is to offer an incentive/thank you to your list of entrants. This can be as simple as emailing them all an exclusive 5% off your next purchase discount code. This is why it is important, where you can, to run giveaways where you require their email to enter, as you collect a large number of consenting new subscribers to your email list!

Whenever you launch a giveaway, you can easily give it an initial boost by sharing your giveaway into a Facebook group specifically filled with people looking to enter giveaways and competitions. A simple Facebook search will show you the most popular groups, then request to join as your personal profile or business profile if the group allows you too and share your giveaway post with the members.

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# SOCIAL MEDIA GLOSSARY

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## A

**A/B testing** - A/B testing measures two social media posts against each other to see which performs best. You can change one element of the post between the versions for example the headline, image, or CTA, so that you can compare and see any difference in performance is because of the change.

**AddThis** - AddThis is a company that offers a wide range of popular share buttons, targeting tools and content recommendations to help you increase engagement on your website and earn more followers on social media.

**Ads Manager** - Ads Manager is Facebook's all-in-one tool for creating, running and analyzing ads on Facebook, Instagram, Messenger or Audience Network.

**AMA** - AMA is an acronym for "ask me anything," where users will use the term to encourage questions from other users.

**Analytics** - Analytics is data that helps you track the performance of your social media content. Examples include page views, clickthrough rate, and engagement rate.

**Algorithm** - An algorithm is a set of formulas developed for a computer to perform a certain function. For example, Facebook has an algorithm that prioritizes which content a user sees in their feed first by determining the likelihood that they'll actually want to see it.

**Avatar** - An avatar is an image or username that represents a person online within forums and social networks.

## B

**Business-to-Business (B2B)** - A B2B business sells products or services to other businesses, such as a marketing consultant or a business software company.

**Business-to-Consumer (B2C)** - A B2C business deals directly with consumers such as a retail store or a hotel.

**Bio** - A Bio is a short description on your social media profile that you fill in to tell people who you are and what you do.

**Bitly** - Bitly is a free URL shortening service that helps you shorten, create and share branded links. It also helpfully provides you with the statistics for those links.

**Bookmarking** - Bookmarking is simply marking something online that you found important, interesting or want to continue reading later.

**Boosted Post** - A boosted post is a Facebook post that you pay to increase its reach. Like Facebook ads, boosted posts allow you to target a specific audience and set a duration and budget. However, you do not have to use Ads Manager to boost a post like you do with the 'main ads', you can boost a post directly of your Facebook page.

**Brand Advocate** - A brand advocate on social media is a customer who supports your brand on social by posting positive messages, leaving positive reviews, or encourage other users to use your products or services.

**Brand Awareness** - Brand awareness is one of the common main goals of social media as it is the level of recognition consumers have with your brand. It can be measured through your analytics such as impressions or reach.

**Business Manager** - Facebook Business Manager is an all-in-one tool that helps businesses to manage their Page(s), ad accounts, and team members for easy account administration.

## C

**Canva** - Canva is an easy-to-use design tool that offers several customizable templates for social images on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter along with templates for wider business activities such as marketing collateral, business cards, postcards and stickers etc.

**Clickbait** - Clickbait is a term to describe marketing material that uses a sensationalized headline to attract clicks.

**Chatbot** - A chatbot is an artificial intelligence program that can automate customer interactions for a business. For example, on Facebook they can be programmed to provide customer service, answer questions, and set up appointments automatically.

**Clickthrough Rate** - Clickthrough rate is a common social media metric that measures the number of clicks advertisers receive on their ads per number of impressions.

**Community Manager** - The role of a community manager is to act as the bridge between a brand and the community it creates. Job responsibilities for them include building, growing and managing a brand's online community. Using analytics tools to monitor social media platforms and using social media to help increase brand loyalty.

**Cost per click (CPC)** - Cost per click is a social media advertising metric that refers to the price you pay for each click on your ad on average.

**Cost per mille (CPM)** - Cost per mille is a social advertising metric that refers to how much you pay per 1,000 impressions. CPM is an important metric to follow.



**Crisis Management** - Social media crisis management is how you handle 'events' that could potentially damage your business reputation. An example of this could be an inappropriate post shared from your account or a large-scale social media boycott against your brand.

**Conversion Rate** - Conversion rate is a common metric tracked in social media that refers to the percentage of people who completed an intended action you wanted them to i.e., filling out an online form.

**Crowdsourcing** – Crowdsourcing is the practice of engaging a crowd -typically online – to achieve a common goal such as innovation, problem solving, or ideas.

## D

**Dark Post** - A dark post is a social media ad that does not appear on the advertiser's timeline, it only shows up in the feeds of users they are targeting.

**Dark Social** - Dark social is web traffic coming from social media that analytics tools struggle to track due to common reasons such as users sharing links privately in chats or direct messages. A study found that 84% of consumer content sharing happens on dark social.

**Direct Message (DM)** - Direct messages most commonly referred to "DMs" are private conversations that occur on Twitter. Both parties must be following one another to send a message.

## E

**eBook** - An eBook is an electronic version of a book and are typically published in PDF form.

**Employee Advocacy** - Employee advocacy refers to the act of employees using their own social presence to promote the company.

**Emoji** - Emojis are small images that are used in electronic messages and often in social media posts. Some examples of emoji are 😊, 🌍, 📦, 🚗, 📞, 🎉, and ❤️.

**Endorsement** - An endorsement on LinkedIn refers to an instance in which another LinkedIn user recognizes you for one of the skills you have listed on your profile.

**Engagement Rate** - Engagement rate is a popular social media metric that refers to the number of interactions such as likes, comments and reactions that a piece of social media content receives.

**Eventbrite** - Eventbrite is a provider of online event management and ticketing services. The service allows users to browse, create, and promote local events. Eventbrite charges a fee in exchange for online ticketing services unless the event is free.

**Evergreen Content** - In content marketing, evergreen content is content that ages well and maintains its value over time as it revolves around a topic that's always relevant to readers.

## F

**Flickr** - Flickr is a popular social network for online picture sharing that allows users to store photos online and then share them with others.

**Forums** - Forums are simply an online discussion site. Users can create a post that post can be accessed by other users at any time. Posts can contain questions, opinions, images, videos, links, and more.

**Friends** - Friends is the term used on Facebook to describe those you are connected with on the platform. Adding a friend means you may see each other's activity in News Feed, Stories and Photos.

## G

**Geotag** - A geotag is an electronic tag that assigns a geographical location to a photo, video or social media post. For example, Instagram users can use geotagging to highlight the location in which their photo was taken.

**Geotargeting** - Geotargeting is the technique of adjusting your ad content based on the location of a user.

**GIF** - GIFs are essentially animated images. GIFs are very popular online because, like memes, they're useful for communicating jokes, emotions, and ideas.

**Google Chrome** - Google Chrome is a free web browser produced by Google available on both mobile devices and desktop computers.

**Groups** - Facebook and LinkedIn offer a Groups feature where people with similar interests can join a group and take part in discussions.

## H

**Handle** - Handle is the term used to describe someone's @username on Twitter. For example, my handle is @ConsultScarlett

**Header Image** - A header image refers to the large photo displayed at the top of your profile on Twitter. On Facebook LinkedIn it is called the banner image and on Facebook it is called the Cover Image.

**Hashtag** - A hashtag is a tag for content and used for categorize information. The symbol # precedes a message or word and make it easily searchable for users. For example, #SocialMedia or #FollowFriday.

**HTML** - HyperText Markup Language (HTML) is a programming language for web pages that provides its content and structure.

## I

**Impressions** - Impressions are a social media metric that measures how many times your post has been shown in users' feeds. Each social network counts impressions differently but you may count multiple impressions for a single user if they have looked at your post more than once.

**Inbound Marketing** - Inbound marketing is a style of marketing that uses techniques to draw customers to products and services. Inbound marketing is permission based, and uses tools such as SEO, blogging, social media, email marketing and lead nurturing.

**Insights** – Every social media platform has an insights page that you can dive into to see valuable analytics about your business page.

**Instant Messaging** - Instant messaging (IM) is a form of real-time, direct text-based communication between two or more people.

## K

**Key Performance Indicator (KPI)** - A key performance indicator is a metric you use to establish whether you are meeting the objectives of your social strategy. For example, if your primary objective on social is to raise brand awareness, you will choose post reach as a KPI.

**Klout** - Klout is a service that measures your social influence. Users can connect various social accounts such as Facebook and YouTube etc., and then provides every user with a score out of 100. The higher the score, the more influence it estimates you have in the social world.

## L

**Link Building** - Link building is an aspect of search engine optimization in which website owners try to get links to their website with the hopes of improving their search engine ranking. External and internal linking both provide more visibility for your website.

**LinkedIn Publishing** - The LinkedIn Publishing Platform allows members to write and share articles on LinkedIn.

**LinkedIn SlideShare** - LinkedIn SlideShare is an online social network for sharing presentations and documents. Users can favourite and embed presentations as well as share them on other social networks such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook.

**Live Streaming** - Live streaming is the act of delivering real-time content over the internet.

**Lurker** - A lurker is a person online who observes but rarely participates.

## **M**

**Meme** – Is an image, video, piece of text, etc., typically humorous that is shared rapidly by internet users. A popular example is Grumpy Cat, a particularly irritable looking cat. Various Photoshopped pictures of Grumpy Cat are online along with captions expressing his distaste for whatever the topic happened to be about.

## **N**

**Native Advertising** - Native content refers to a type of online advertising in which the ad copy and format is designed to match the look, feel and function of the media format in which they appear.

**Newsjacking** - Newsjacking refers to the practice of piggyback off the day's biggest news stories to draw attention to your own content.

## **O**

**Objectives** - In social advertising, objectives are the results you want to achieve through your ad campaign. These are typically traffic, engagement, conversions, brand awareness, and more.

## **P**

**Permalink** - A permalink is an address or URL of a particular post within a blog or website.

**Podcast** - A podcast is a series of audio digital media files made available on the internet for downloading to a computer or mobile device, they are typically available as a series.

**PPC** - pay per click (PPC) is an online advertising model used to drive traffic to websites, in which an advertiser pays a publisher when the ad is clicked

## R

**Real-Time Marketing** - Real-time marketing occurs when brands react quickly to news events happening online or offline. It ensures that you are fresh, relevant and up to date with the needs of your audience.

**Recommendation** - A recommendation is written by a LinkedIn member to recognize the work of another. You can request recommendations from your 1st-degree connections you work with or have worked with.

**Relevance Score** - Relevance score is a metric available in Facebook Ads Manager that tells you how well your target audience is responding to your ad on a scale of 1 to 10. The higher your relevance score, the more relevant your ad is to your target audience.

**Retargeting** - Retargeting is an advertising technique that allows marketers to display ads to people who have previously visited their website.

## S

**Search Engine Optimization** - Search engine optimization is the process of making sure more people find your website on Google and the other major search engines.

**Shareable Content** - Shareable content on social media is content that is considered useful, entertaining or inspiring and get many users sharing it with their networks.

**Selfie** - A selfie is a self-portrait taken using the reverse camera screen on a smartphone. They are commonly shared on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook using the hashtag #selfie.

**Skype** - Skype is a free program that allows for text, audio, and video chats between users.

**Snapchat** - Snapchat is a social app that allows users to send and receive photos and videos known as "snaps," that appear temporarily before disappearing, Users can add text and drawings to their snaps and control the list of recipients in which they send them to.

**Social Listening** - Brands often use social listening software to gather brand mentions, comments, hashtags, and relevant posts from across social media to provide insights on what users are talking about.

**Social Media Monitoring** - Social media monitoring is the process of identifying and responding to individual brand mentions on social media.

**Social Media ROI** - Social media return on investment (ROI) is a measurement of how much revenue your activities on social media are generating for your business compared with how much you are spending on them. Social media ROI is difficult to estimate as what it can do for your business often is not quantifiable.

**Social Proof** - Social proof is the psychological phenomenon wherein people copy the actions of others. Positive comments about your business or product are social proof as it is an endorsement that says to others that you or your product is trustworthy.

**Social Selling** - Social selling is leveraging the power of social media to engage with prospects and establish rapport by answering their questions, providing helpful content etc.

## T

**Tag** - Tags allow social media users to mention an individual or business with a social profile in a post or comment. On Facebook and Instagram, tagging notifies the recipient and hyperlinks to the tagged profile.

**Thread** - A series of comments on a post.

**TikTok** - TikTok is one of the fastest-growing social media platforms of all time, sharing user generated bitesize looping videos that can also have musical overlays.

**Traffic** - Traffic is the number of users who visit a given website or page.

**Trending Topic** - Trending topics are the most talked about topics and hashtags on a social media network. On Twitter and Facebook they display as clickable links in which users can either click through to join the conversation or simply browse the related content.

**Troll** – An internet troll refers to a person who is known for deliberately creating upset and controversy in an online setting such as a forum or the comment section on a social media platform. The aim for them is to provoke a reaction from other users, so the best way to handle them is to ignore them.

**Tumblr** - Tumblr is a microblogging platform that allows users to post text, images, video, music and links to their blog.

**Twitterverse** – is the nickname given to the community of users who are active on Twitter.

## U

**User-Generated Content (or UGC)** - User-generated content is content such as blogs, videos, photos, quotes, etc. that is created by created by people, rather than brands.

## V

**Vanity Metric** - A vanity metric is a statistic that may look like a positive indicator of performance but does not actually provide you with valuable insights. Vanity metrics such as social media followers, page views, subscribers look satisfying on paper but don't impact your business goals.

**Viral** - Viral is a term used to describe an instance in which a piece of content is frequent shared all over the internet.

**Vlogging** - Vlog stands for a video blog or video log and refers to a type of blog where typically all of the content is in a video format. Common Vlog posts consist of creating a video of yourself where you talk on a particular subject such as reviewing a product.

## W

**Webinar** - A webinar is an online seminar or presentation that is hosted by an individual or a business.

**WhatsApp** - WhatsApp is a messaging, phone, and social media app that allows people to connect internationally. WhatsApp allows you to send an infinite number of text messages, photos and videos by using your phone's internet connection.

## Y

**Yelp** - Yelp is not a technically a social media platform, but as it is one of the leading sites for online recommendations and help connects people with great local businesses, you should certainly consider creating a business profile.

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# FINAL WORDS

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## Thank You!

Hopefully you have enjoyed reading this guide and start to see great improvements in your social media marketing by implementing the material that has been covered within it. I appreciate you taking the time to buy this guide, and if you've got a moment, I'd love to hear what you thought about it. Share your thoughts with me via email on [hello@scarlettdarbyshireuk.com](mailto:hello@scarlettdarbyshireuk.com) or let me know what you thought over on social media.

## If You Get Stuck!

I'm only an email away, just give me a shout! I can always be reached on [hello@scarlettdarbyshireuk.com](mailto:hello@scarlettdarbyshireuk.com) or on Twitter. My passion lies in helping small businesses just like yours, so do not be afraid to reach out and ask.

Follow me on Twitter @ConsultScarlett

Connect with Me On LinkedIn: Search for Scarlett Darbyshire

## Keep Going!

Social media is more like a marathon than a sprint, but anything that's worth doing takes time. Just remember to keep at it and you will be glad you did a year from today!

All information was correct at the time of writing (Jan 2020) If you notice a mistake then whoops! I'm only human. Let me know so I can fix it 😊