



# A Guide to Social Media Marketing for Small Businesses

New York Small Business  
Development Center





## A Guide to Social Media Marketing For Small Business



NEW YORK SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER

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### About this Text:

Participants will be introduced to key social media marketing concepts and learn how to create a comprehensive social media marketing strategy. This text includes hands-on activities for exploring audience analysis, goal planning, and content creation. Additionally, helpful material for generating a strong brand identity and voice as well as general content ideas across social media platforms is provided.

Readers can access the PDF version of this text here: <https://www.sbdjcc.org/tip-resources>

### About the Author:

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### About the NY Small Business Development Center at Jamestown Community College:

The vision of the NY Small Business Development Center at JCC is to create economic sustainability for all New Yorkers – one business at a time. The SBDC delivers high quality business counseling and training to clients looking to start a business or improve the performance of an existing business. Services are free and confidential. Call 716.338.1024 or visit our websites: <http://jamestown.nysbdc.org> or [www.sunyjc.edu/sbdc](http://www.sunyjc.edu/sbdc) for more information.



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### I. What is Social Media?

Social media (SM) is a broad term for creating and sharing content across digital platforms. Traditional media (i.e. newspaper, radio, television, film, etc.) has typically been a one-way communication interaction. On the other hand, social media is a two-way communication interaction. The key word here is *interaction*. Social media provides the opportunity to respond instantly to the content by posting feedback, sharing with friends, or creating original content and distributing it across social media platforms. Social media content is typically engaging, user-driven, and personal. Today, consumers and businesses alike use social media to connect and engage with one another, but they also use it as a key marketing tool.

### II. What is Social Media Marketing?

The introduction of the Internet has drastically changed the marketing landscape by creating a space where companies and consumers can easily interact with one another. How are they doing this? Through social media platforms. These platforms allow companies to initiate, monitor, and drive conversations related to their products and brand. Consumers can now tell their favorite businesses how they feel about certain products and share this news with all of their friends – a tool that is both dangerous and valuable to the business owner. Using social media platforms as a marketing tool has opened the door for conversations, which opens the door for a higher level of customer satisfaction and brand loyalty.

### III. What is Social Media Marketing Not?

Social media marketing is not a be-all, end-all marketing strategy. It cannot be the sole driver for your marketing team, but it can greatly enrich your marketing plan. If social media platforms are specifically designed to create engaging content that drives two-way interactions, then businesses should focus on the interactional aspect of this technology. The main goal of social media marketing is to create genuine, dynamic connections with real people. Therefore, social media marketing is not a podium to stand on with a really loud megaphone constantly shouting, “Buy this!” at anyone who wanders by your business. That doesn’t start a conversation! Instead, think of social media marketing as a way to constantly connect with the consumer by bringing them meaningful content that cultivates an authentic relationship with your brand and product.





## A Guide to Social Media Marketing for Small Businesses

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### Section 2: This Text's Approach to Social Media Marketing

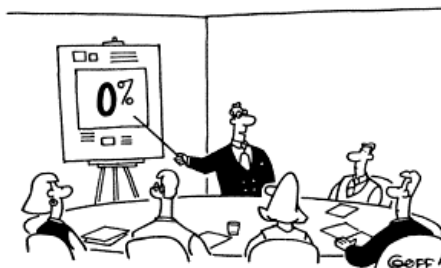
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There are a lot of different approaches to social media marketing. One approach focuses heavily on gaining followers and then using this growth in followers to measure ROI. Another approach focuses on engagement; constantly asking followers to like, share, comment, or follow pages and content. This type of approach relies on a constant “call to action” and connotes content with no engagement as ineffective. Still another approach involves a clean, business-like tone with little brand personality.

While there is a time and place for each of the approaches noted above, this text aims to create a comprehensive and customer-centered approach for your social media marketing strategy that is maintainable and targeted.

A customer-centered approach primarily focuses on the relationship-capacity of social media and prioritizes authenticity. It also recognizes the humanity in your business, which can sometimes be lost in the digital world. These are real people with whom you are interacting; keeping the customer at the center of your strategy takes some of the pressure off of trying to create perfect content. Your focus is on building relationships and trust with your customers. To do this, be authentic to your business and brand and keep your customer at the center of your messaging. Aim for a professional social media presence, constant engagement, and an increase in followers, but also understand that there will be periods with little interaction. This gives you the flexibility to vary your content and be creative in your messaging while also remaining true to your brand and brand voice.

Ultimately, your social media strategy can be as complex or as simple as you want it to be. Be realistic in the time you have available to manage your social media content and plan your content accordingly. Furthermore, it is okay to only focus your strategy on one platform and do that platform extremely well. As you will learn, each platform requires a different strategy, content type, and time commitment.



"Our study concludes that this is the percentage of our customers who will buy from us without any effort whatsoever on our part."



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### Section 3: Social Media Terminology

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The introduction of new technology has brought with it new terminology. Key terms will be identified throughout this guide but here are a few of the basics to get you started. All terminology in this guide is listed in order of importance.

- A. **Platforms:** sometimes referred to as social networks, these are web-based applications that make it easy to create and transmit content. These include: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn, YouTube, and many more!
- B. **Content:** the physical words, pictures, video, and audio that is created and shared across social networks.
- C. **Post:** the act of publishing content on a platform.
- D. **Engagement:** refers to the amount of interaction (likes, comments, shares, and follows) a post receives. Oftentimes, engagement is used to measure social media goals.
- E. **Reach:** the number of users that have come across your post. This may include your followers as well as any other social media users who have encountered your post from another account sharing your content.
- F. **Feed:** frequently updated content that appears on social media sites. Typically, users scroll through their feeds to gather social information and posted content appears on the feed of a social media platform.
- G. **Story:** content that is shared on the platform for 24 hours but does not permanently appear on a business' page. Stories are primarily used on Snapchat, Instagram, and Facebook.
- H. **Influencer:** influential individuals on a social media platform. These are industry-specific trendsetters (e.g. bloggers, spokespersons, etc.).
- I. **Social media ROI:** a measurement of effectiveness of a business' investment in social media and depends largely on the unique social media goals of that business.
- J. **SEO:** short for Search Engine Optimization. SEO focuses on search results rankings, with the primary goal to be featured as high up on the first page of search results as possible. Social media can help SEO by bringing more traffic to a business' website and increasing brand presence on search engine results pages.
- J. **Content Management System (CMS):** also known as Social Media Management Tools; web-based services or apps that connect a user's social media accounts and helps the user be more efficient. These tools are often used to schedule posts to be distributed across accounts, monitor and listen to the social media landscape, and gather helpful data to analyze return on investment. (e.g., Hootsuite, Buffer, etc.)
- K. **Social media monitoring:** a process of monitoring and responding to interactions occurring on social media platforms.



It is recommended that you prepare a few items before beginning your adventure into the social media frontier. This will make the transition to social media marketing easier and help you optimize your social media tools for success.

### I. Website

The website is your home base and much of your social media marketing will drive traffic back to your website. As a result, your website should be professional in nature and have similar standards to other businesses in your industry. You will want to link the social media accounts for your business to your website once you have created profiles on these platforms.

#### **Basic Website Tips:**

- Own the domain name (www.yourbusiness.com).
- Have a clear theme; graphics and styles should blend nicely, keep the theme consistent throughout.
- Keep it up to date. This includes basic business information, photos, products, and contact forms.

### II. Email

By now you probably have an established email address for your business. But since social media is about connecting and interacting with customers, be intentional about your email address. It should include your website's domain name (e.g., email@yourbusiness.com) as this adds professionalism to your interactions, especially if you will be using influencers to enhance your social media content. Your web manager should be able to set this up for you. For managing social media accounts, it is recommended that you create a separate email for use with your social media accounts (e.g., socialmediamanager@yourbusiness.com). This will help you manage any notifications you receive from your social media networks in one location.

### III. Logo

Your logo is the face of your business. This is the image that most customers will see when they interact with any of your social media profiles. Therefore, your logo needs to be a high-resolution photo (at least 300ppi or dpi). Whoever designed your logo should be able to help you with this. Different social media platforms have different aspect ratio requirements for logo sizes.

### IV. Photos

Social media networks thrive on photos. Many social media platforms require multiple photos to create a profile, so you will want to gather several photos that represent different aspects of your business and brand. These photos showcase your company and provide a visual introduction to customers. These should be a mix of professional photos (images you may have used on your

website) and candid photos. The images you use on your social media accounts could include any combination of the following: your logo, professional graphics of your products or business, storefront images, employee photos, any other images you have used for print marketing. Again, you will want to use high-resolution images and refer to the required aspect ratios for each platform.

## V. Brand Vision

If you already have a logo and a website then you most likely have a clear brand vision, which needs to be carried out across each of your social media platforms. Consider the color scheme, image aesthetic, and overall company culture that you want to incorporate when using social media marketing for your business. It is important to be consistent across platforms so that customers can easily recognize your business and brand online.

## VI. Brand Voice

*“It shouldn’t be a competition about who shouts the loudest. Your brand and social voice should be one and the same: informative, responsive, and very, very approachable.”*

- Zero to 100,000: Social Media Tips and Tricks for Small Businesses

Social media marketing is about interacting with customers in meaningful ways. This means that your brand and social voice should be consistent and relatable to customers. In the social media world, consumers are connecting with real people in real time – something that you should focus on as you develop your brand voice. Also keep in mind your company culture and overall tone when creating social media content. Distilled, an online marketing company, has a great article that goes more in depth for creating your brand voice: <https://www.distilled.net/tone-of-voice/>.<sup>1</sup>

## VII. Time

Social media marketing takes time. While there are tools to help you do it more efficiently, it still takes time to create, monitor, and respond to social media content. Once you have chosen the most effective social media platforms for your business, you will want to develop and implement a social media marketing plan (addressed in section 5) to help you stay on track. Ideally, you will have a social media marketing leader who manages your platform accounts and generates content. But if not, plan to set aside time each week or day to manage your social media marketing.

Social Media Beginner’s Checklist		
Professional website	YES	NO
Email address for SM accounts, including domain name	YES	NO
High resolution logo in correct aspect ratio for platform	YES	NO
High resolution images related to business, brand, and products	YES	NO
Identified brand vision, including color scheme, aesthetics, etc.	YES	NO
Identified brand voice	YES	NO
Designated time for SM marketing	YES	NO

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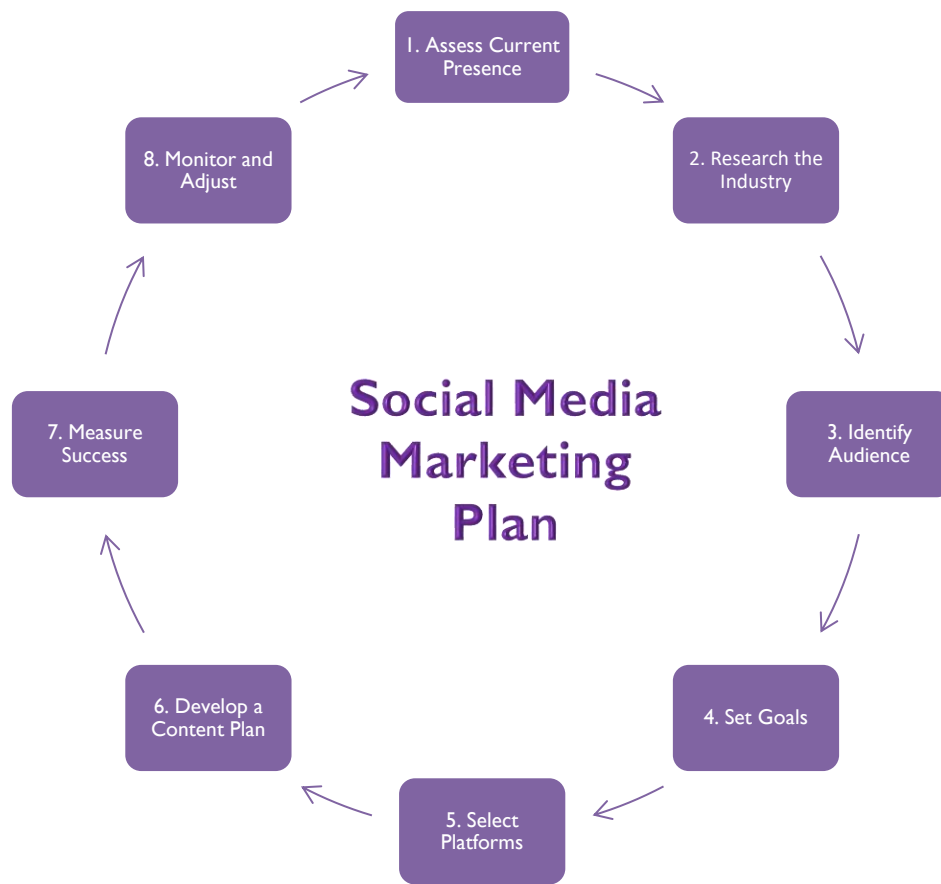
<sup>1</sup> Hyperlinks throughout this text can easily be accessed in the pdf version available at: <https://www.sbdcc.org/tip-resources>



### Section 5: Creating a Social Media Marketing Plan; Step by Step

A social media marketing plan (SMMP) is a summary of your social media presence as it relates to your business goals. This plan is a multi-step process that includes assessing your current social media presence, researching the social media landscape of your industry, identifying key target audiences for each platform, creating clear social media objectives to reach that audience, and generating content across platforms to achieve business goals. Once developed, your social media plan will help you track and measure success across platforms. It is never stagnant, so you will need to monitor and adjust your strategy as your goals are met.

A standardized formula for creating a social media marketing plan doesn't exist, but several resources are available that provide consistent recommendations. These recommendations have been organized into a step-by-step plan that is presented on the following pages. However, there are a few things to keep in mind before you create your social media plan. First, be specific in your plan; create clear and tangible goals. Second, be realistic with your plan; it should mirror other business goals unrelated to your social media strategy. Third, be consistent; your voice, branding, and goals should be relatively similar across platforms.





## Step 1: Assess Your Current Social Media Presence

You should assess your current social media presence before beginning a new social media marketing strategy. Whether you're starting from scratch, improving, or starting over, you might find that your brand, product, or service is already being talked about in key social media networks. Use the worksheets 1 and 2 to evaluate your current presence in the social media landscape.

Worksheet 1: Search your Business				
<b>1</b>	<p>Enter your business name into a search engine (e.g., Google)</p> <p>View the top 10 search results, list all results that are relevant to your business, include any of your social media accounts that come up in the search.</p>			
<b>2</b>	Is the information listed in the search related to your business accurate?	YES	NO	EDITS:
<b>3</b>	If nothing related to your business appears on the first page of the search, how many pages do you have to search before you find something related to your business?	QTY:		
<b>4</b>	Summarize your overall Google presence; identify any keywords that are consistent in your search results.			
<b>5</b>	Identify 3 goals you want to achieve related to your search results.	1. 2. 3.		

*Note: You should repeat this same exercise with other search engines.*

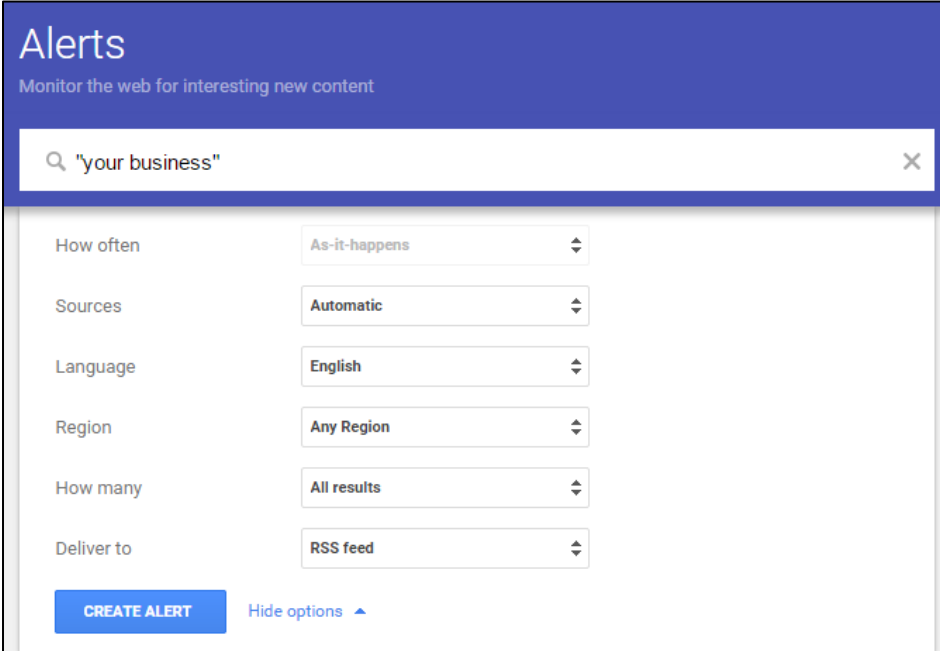
Worksheet 2: Current Social Media Presence					
Platform:	Is your business using this platform?		Current number of followers, likes, etc.	Last date of posted content:	Post with the most follower engagement:
Facebook	YES	NO			
Instagram	YES	NO			
Snapchat	YES	NO			
YouTube	YES	NO			
LinkedIn	YES	NO			
Twitter	YES	NO			
Pinterest	YES	NO			
Business Page on Google	YES	NO			
Blog	YES	NO			
Other:	YES	NO			
Other:	YES	NO			
Identify your 3 most successful platforms to date. This isn't necessarily based on followers; it could be where you have the most content or the most customer engagement.			1. 2. 3.		
Identify any platform accounts that need to be deleted or made inactive.					
Document your company website traffic and page views.					
Based on these results, identify the top 3 social media platforms where you would like to focus your marketing efforts.			1. 2. 3.		

### Step 2: Research Your Industry

This text's approach to social media marketing is about building customer engagement by developing a relationship founded on interaction. When it comes to interaction, social media communication mirrors interpersonal communication – it's best done when you listen and then respond. The research step of your plan is designed to help you listen to your customers and better gauge their interests. This is also the time to listen to your industry and see which social media strategies are working and which ones are not.

#### I. Listen

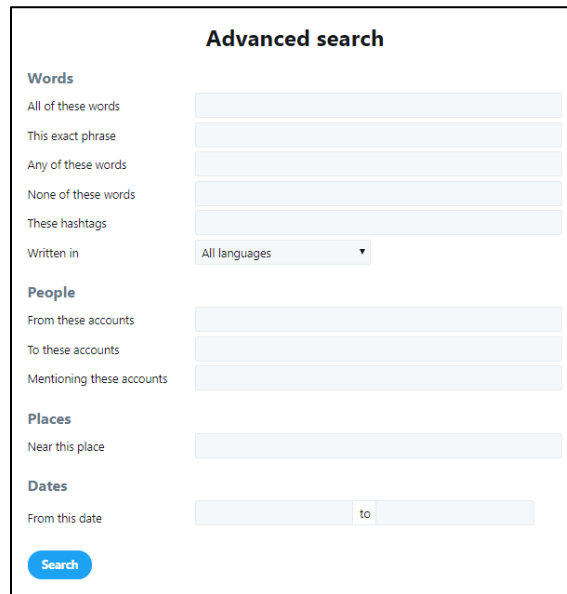
Listening to trending topics on social media is easier than you might think. Start with Google alerts to search for your company. Sign in to your Google account (or set one up), go to [www.google.com/alerts](http://www.google.com/alerts), and type in a search for your brand or company. If the search results are too broad, use quotation marks around keywords to get more relevant results. You can adjust the alert options for how often and how many results you receive in the alert as well as the type of sources you want to monitor. Create alerts for your business, products, or other topics related to your industry. You can also generate alerts for competitors to find out what is being said about them. Additionally, if you have a blog or want to connect with the blogging community, narrow the source to "blog" to see if any bloggers are talking about your business or products. Keep a running list of all news articles, blog posts, and important content related to your business. These are items that you can use as content to distribute across your social media platforms later.

The image is a screenshot of the Google Alerts website. At the top, there's a blue header with the word "Alerts" in white. Below it, a subtitle reads "Monitor the web for interesting new content". A search bar contains the text "your business" with a magnifying glass icon on the left and a close 'x' icon on the right. Below the search bar, there are several settings, each with a label and a dropdown menu: "How often" is set to "As-it-happens", "Sources" is set to "Automatic", "Language" is set to "English", "Region" is set to "Any Region", "How many" is set to "All results", and "Deliver to" is set to "RSS feed". At the bottom left of the settings area is a blue button that says "CREATE ALERT". To its right is a link that says "Hide options" with a small upward-pointing triangle icon.

(Source: [www.google.com/alerts](http://www.google.com/alerts))

Another helpful listening tool is Twitter's Advanced Search. The advanced search tool can help you find relevant followers and monitor conversations related to your business or products. You do not have to have a Twitter account to use the advanced search option. Follow this link:

<https://twitter.com/search-advanced>. Change up the keywords, hashtags, and location until you find tweets that are significant to your business. You can also narrow down the search to users who follow or tweet with your industry influencers, which will help you generate more followers and watch how Twitter conversations are taking place in your industry. Be sure to search for your competitors as well to gauge their social presence on the platform.

The image shows the 'Advanced search' form on Twitter. It is divided into several sections: 'Words' with options for 'All of these words', 'This exact phrase', 'Any of these words', 'None of these words', and 'These hashtags'; 'Written in' with a dropdown menu set to 'All languages'; 'People' with options for 'From these accounts', 'To these accounts', and 'Mentioning these accounts'; 'Places' with 'Near this place'; and 'Dates' with 'From this date' and a 'to' field. A blue 'Search' button is at the bottom left.

(Source: <https://twitter.com/search-advanced?lang=en>)

## II. Investigate the Competition

It's time to dig deep and analyze the competition. Use worksheet 3 on the following page to investigate the competition; use a new worksheet for each competitor. If you do not have a direct competitor, you can use worksheet 3 to analyze other businesses in your industry who are similar to you (via geographic area, audience, role in the industry, etc.). For example, you are in the tourism industry and there is not another tourist site like you in your geographic area – instead, research another tourist site with a similar type of customer but in a different part of the country.

Understanding the competition and their role in the social media landscape is critical to a successful social media strategy. For example, they may be using industry-specific hashtags that you can also use or maybe they have developed a strong brand identity that will help you differentiate your own brand identity from theirs. Pay particular attention to how their customers engage with their brand and the types of content that receives the most engagement. Hopefully you will be able to pinpoint an area where the competition is not meeting the customer's needs – this is an opportunity for you!

Here are some additional resources for evaluating the competition:

- Social Blade has a YouTube specific comparison tool: <https://socialblade.com/youtube/compare>
- Sprout Social has a free template that follows their recommended competition investigation approach: <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-competitive-analysis/>

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*Process note: complete this worksheet for each individual competitor you want to research.*

Worksheet 3: Competition Investigation		
Competitor's Name:		
Social Media Presence		Post Engagement
Platform:	Follower Count:	Content type (text, images, videos, blogs, etc.):
Keywords and Hashtags	What do they do well?	What do you want to do better?





## Step 3: Identify Your Target Audience

Your initial assessment and research phases have hopefully given you a general idea of who is currently talking about your business and who you want to connect with in the future. Now it's time to bridge the gap between your target audience and your social media audience.

**Target Audience:** the group(s) of people you want to reach with your social media content; typically defined by specific demographics, buying behaviors, values, and lifestyles.

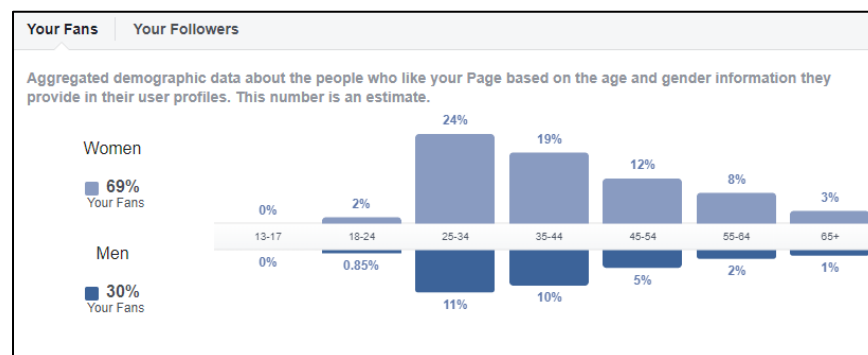
### I. Gather Audience Data

If you are starting your social media presence from scratch, or want data on platforms you don't already use, [Pew Research](#)<sup>2</sup> has compiled an extremely helpful list of the most popular social networks and their demographics. You can also send a survey to your current customers via email marketing, Google forms, or more traditional paper forms. Here is a list of questions you might want to ask your customer base to better understand their social media use:

- Which social media platforms do you use most often?
- What do you primarily use social media for?
- What types of content do you enjoy on social media (images, videos, quotes, etc.)?
- Do you have any favorite accounts that you follow? If so, who?

If you have an established customer base on social media, you can use the analytical tools available on your platforms (e.g., Insights on Facebook and Instagram, Analytics on YouTube and Twitter, etc.) to learn more about your followers. These tools will show you demographics like age, gender, location, and language as well as when your audience is online.

This is an example of using the Facebook Insights tool on your business page to determine the demographics of your current audience. Using the data from Insights below, this business's primary audience is women ages 25-34, with a secondary audience being women ages 45-54.



(Source: <http://facebook.com>)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/04/10/share-of-u-s-adults-using-social-media-including-facebook-is-mostly-unchanged-since-2018/>

Facebook also offers an Audience Insights tool (available through [Facebook Business](https://www.facebook.com/business/)<sup>3</sup>) that can or cannot be connected to your page and allows you to create [custom audiences](https://www.facebook.com/business/help/697694370291354)<sup>4</sup> for advertising. Whether or not you want to pay for advertisements, it's a great tool for seeing the broader Facebook audience available to you using more specific demographic markers (jobs, hobbies, relationship status, etc.). Each of the platforms has a similar insights tool available for use when advertising.

## II. Define your Target Audience

Understanding your target audience is a critical piece to developing social media content for an audience-centered approach. Your primary goal is to create content that engages your audience. The more specifically you can define your audience, the easier it is to curate content for that audience. You might need multiple target audiences if you offer multiple products or services.

Think of your business as an open door and imagine each of your customers entering through that door. Your job is to group those customers based on similar demographics, buying behaviors, and needs. Start with four categories of customers – use the data you collected from your current social media analytics as well as your market research to inform the categories. The categories should be broad enough to capture the audience, but specific enough to be differentiate each category (i.e., persona). Every customer that walks through your (metaphorical) door needs to fit into one of these categories. Now you can write the target market statement and develop audience personas.

### A. Write a Target Market Statement

Create a target market statement that differentiates potential audience groups from one another. [Hootsuite](https://blog.hootsuite.com/target-market/)<sup>5</sup> recommends using this kind of a template when writing your target market statement:

*Our target market is [gender] aged [age range], who live in [location or type of place], and like to [activities and/or interests].*

Take a look at other businesses where you are the customer (company pages connected to the ads you see on your social media accounts are a great place to start!). Based on their social media content, do you think you could guess their target market statement? How do you see yourself as their target audience? Play around with a few target market statements before you settle on the statement specific to each audience.

### B. Create Personas

Once you have a strong target market statement for each of your audience groups, you can generate personas that explore your customers' work life, interests, and hobbies. Use worksheet 4 on the following page to identify the demographics, behaviors, interests, and needs/goals of each persona.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/business/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/business/help/697694370291354>

<sup>5</sup> <https://blog.hootsuite.com/target-market/>

Worksheet 4: Define the Target Audience			
<b>Persona 1:</b>		<b>Persona 2:</b>	
Target market statement:		Target market statement:	
Demographics	Behaviors	Demographics	Behaviors
Interests	Needs/Goals	Interests	Needs/Goals
<b>Persona 3:</b>		<b>Persona 4:</b>	
Target market statement:		Target market statement:	
Demographics	Behaviors	Demographics	Behaviors
Interests	Needs/Goals	Interests	Needs/Goals



### Step 4: Set Social Media Goals

You've assessed your current social media presence, completed your market research, and identified a target audience – it's time to set your goals!

Your social media marketing goals should be unique to your business and overall company vision. They are also a crucial component for measuring the return on investment (ROI) of your social media marketing efforts. So what can you measure? Hootsuite identifies the four key customer journey stages<sup>6</sup> and then connects them to measurable metrics<sup>7</sup>:

- **Awareness:** *these metrics illuminate your current and potential audience*
- **Engagement:** *these metrics show how audiences are interacting with your content*
- **Conversion:** *these metrics demonstrate the effectiveness of your social engagement*
- **Consumer:** *these metrics reflect how active customers think and feel about your brand*

When you set a goal with awareness in mind you might be looking at follower growth rate, post reach, mentions, or share of voice (see appendix B). A goal that wants to measure engagement will be looking at likes, shares, and comments but can also measure the average engagement rate over each platform. Conversion metrics look at click-through-rates and cost-per-clicks if you are running a paid campaign. Finally, a goal that focuses on consumer metrics will examine reviews, endorsements, testimonials, and customer satisfaction surveys. How to measure each of these goals is outlined in step seven of the SMMP process.

Setting goals with measurements in mind is key to a successful social media strategy so that the content you create is intentional, targeted, and directly connected to your overall SMMP. However, your goals are not just made up, they come from the research and audience analysis steps of your plan.

In order to best identify what goals you should set, start with a SWOT analysis using worksheet 5 and then create your social media goals using worksheet 6.

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<sup>6</sup> A quick explanation of customer journey stages: Awareness focuses on potential consumers becoming familiar with your brand. Engagement (sometimes called consideration) is when a customer recognizes they have a need and seeks out your brand to meet that need. Conversion is the purchase stage. Consumer is a customer who has purchased your product and can now spread the word about their experience with your product.

<sup>7</sup> (Shleyner 2018)

## I. Generate a SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis is a traditional marketing tool for identifying the **Strengths**, **Weaknesses**, **Opportunities**, and **Threats** of your business. You can adopt this same approach for your social media marketing strategy. Use the information gleaned from worksheets 1-4 to complete a thorough SWOT analysis on worksheet 5.

Here are some questions to get you started:

- **Strengths** – What does your company do effectively when it comes to social media? What qualities do you have that set you apart from your competition? Do you have any resources available to you? Do you have anyone with special skills (i.e. video editing, photography, graphic design, etc.)? What kind of content has worked for you in the past? Do you have any user-generated content you can share?
- **Weaknesses** – Are you working with limited time and/or resources? Do you have too many messengers or an unclear brand voice? Do you have a limited social media presence or low audience engagement? Are there areas where your competitors really succeed? Do you need to better identify your target audience?
- **Opportunities** – Can you satisfy a niche marketing need with your social media strategy? Are there any upcoming events or campaigns that you can feature on your social media pages? Are their training or learning opportunities available to you? Do you have a new product being launched or a growing customer base? Do you have any press or media coverage? Can you use your social media content to drive traffic to your website?
- **Threats** – Are there any emerging competitors? Do you have any negative reviews or other threats to your brand reputation? Are your customers losing interest or aging out of your market? Do you have budget limitations? Do you have lack of organizational buy-in for creating a social media strategy?

<b>Worksheet 5: Social Media SWOT Analysis</b>	
Strengths:	Weaknesses:
Opportunities:	Threats:

## II. Set your Social Media Goals

The weaknesses, opportunities, and threats identified in the SWOT analysis determine the current challenges facing your social media presence. Take a minute to think about how the challenges you identified fit within the customer journey stages (page 23) so that you can measure the success of your goals later down the road. Knowing your challenges and how they fit within the overall customer journey gives you the ability to write strong social media goals and clear plans of action. Use the goals worksheet example and template on the following pages to create a plan of action for your social media strategy.

Your goals need to be SMART<sup>8</sup>:

- (S) Specific: set clear, simple, and defined goals
- (M) Measurable: goals should include measurable metrics
- (A) Attainable: establish goals that can be met with current resources (time and money)
- (R) Relevant: relate your social media goals to your overall business goals
- (T) Timely: be clear in the amount of time it will take to achieve each goal

So what kind of goals can you set that are SMART? Check out the table below for inspiration.

Goal:	Metrics related to this type of goal:
Increase brand awareness	Follower growth, post reach, brand mentions
Increase engagement	Average engagement (likes, shares, comments) compared to total followers, amplification rates
Increase approval actions	Likes and favorites relative to total audience
Increase reach	Reach numbers for specific content
Drive traffic to website	URL shares, clicks, conversions, site traffic increases
Drive sales	Social media promotions, website traffic
Increase followers	Rate of new follower growth, demonstrate consistency
Partner with influencers	Influencer related engagement
Increase testimonials	Customer reviews and endorsements
Increase share of voice	Track conversations related to your business, competitors, and industry; measure sentiment

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<sup>8</sup> (Hatch 2019)



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*To get you thinking, here is what a completed goals worksheet might look like:*

Worksheet 6: Social Media Goals		
CHALLENGE:	GOAL:	PLAN OF ACTION:
No current SM presence	Create SM presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Build a YouTube Page to increase web presence</li><li>• Identify 3 additional key platforms that are valuable to industry customers</li><li>• Create accounts on these platforms and generate engaging content</li></ul>
Low website traffic	Drive customers to the website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure that all social media accounts are linked to the company website</li><li>• Produce content that includes links to helpful resources on the company website</li><li>• Consider enhancing your website with a blog that provides valuable industry content to drive new visitors to the website</li></ul>
Weak audience engagement	Increase audience engagement on current SM platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assess current content type – compare to industry standard</li><li>• Get creative! Focus marketing efforts where it counts (contests, surveys, videos, etc.)</li><li>• Drive new conversations with better keywords and hashtags</li><li>• Identify and connect with industry influencers</li></ul>

Worksheet 6: Social Media Goals		
CHALLENGE:	GOAL:	PLAN OF ACTION:

### Step 5: Select Your Platforms

Choose the platforms that will be best for your business and focus your energy on managing those platforms well. Don't try to maintain social media accounts on every platform out there. Select the ones that will work best with your company culture, brand vision, and available resources. Review the information you gathered during the research step, the social media goals you created in step 4, and your target audience information to decide which platforms will bring your company the most value. This is also a great opportunity to remove platforms from your social media strategy if they are outdated, underutilized, or inefficient for your marketing plan.

Once you've decided which social networks you want to join, use the worksheet below to organize your account information in one location. Keep this information updated and on hand. It will be especially helpful if you have multiple people managing the company's social media accounts.

Worksheet 7: Social Media Platforms				
Platform	Account Name/URL	Email address linked to account	Password*	Mission statement and related SMMP goals to platform

*\*This is not the safest or most secure way to store passwords*



### Step 6: Develop a Content Plan

Content is the most important part of your social media marketing plan because it drives customer interaction. Your day-to-day tasks related to your SMMP will primarily focus on content curation and creation.

*“Great content that is successful for social media purposes is usually relevant, personal, evergreen, engaging, and targeted to a specific audience with which the information and stories resonate.”*

- Social Media for Strategic Communication: Creative Strategies and Research-Based Applications

#### I. Get Organized

Start with some broad questions to guide your content strategy:

- **Connect to overall goals:** what do you want your content to accomplish? Some of this was probably addressed when you completed worksheet 6.
- **Determine what’s been working:** use worksheets 2 and 3 to determine content types that resonate with your audience and within your industry.
- **Take inventory:** what has your company already created that could be shared via social media (e.g. pictures, flyers, white papers, blog posts, training videos, FAQ pages, etc.)? How could you repurpose traditional marketing materials for social media content? You may find that you have a host of content available to you that simply needs to be repackaged for social media.
- **Establish your brand voice:** what is the overall tone you are aiming for with your social media content? Is it positive and cheerful? Matter of fact? Honest and unfiltered? How will you communicate with your audience?

Consider the following before developing your content plan:

- If your brand was a person, what would its personality be like?
- Describe your company using 10 adjectives.
- Describe what your company is *not* using 10 adjectives.
- How do you want your customers to think of your brand?

#### II. Understand the Types of Content

There are three major categories of content:

- **Original content:** content you create and distribute across your social media networks
- **Shared content:** content that someone else has created that you share (e.g. news stories, gifs, funny videos, etc.) on your social media page
- **User-generated content:** content that unpaid followers create which can then be credited and featured on your business’ social media account

All three types of content are vital to your overall social media marketing plan. Shared and user-generated content takes the pressure off of always having to create original content. These are also great fillers on your content calendar (worksheet 9), giving you more time and inspiration when producing your own content.

Each type of content will get you closer to achieving the social media rule of thirds<sup>9</sup> for your content plan. Your content plan should include a variety of posts that promote your business and products, keep your audience and community in mind, and aim to generate engagement.

#### **Social Media's Rule of Thirds**

- 1/3 of your social content promotes your business, converts readers, and generates profit
- 1/3 of your social content should surface and share ideas and stories from thought leaders in your industry or like-minded businesses
- 1/3 of your social content should be based on personal interactions and build your brand

Understanding the ideal content balance can help you with content ideation. Set up brainstorming time and update worksheet 8 frequently to keep your ideas fresh. The following pages will further help you in generating content ideas. Keep in mind that these are broad ideas, with additional resources on page 37 and Appendix A.

### **III. Content Type I: Original Content**

#### **A. Stories**

Humans are natural storytellers and a lot of social media content is centered on stories. People use social media to create stories about their daily lives or to share stories that influenced them in some way. If you think about it, a lot of the viral content on the Internet is a story of some kind – someone's marriage proposal, a soldier coming home, a child learning to talk, a good Samaritan lending a helping hand, the list goes on. Tap into the story network and start telling your company's story!

If your company has a blog, you can use it to set the foundation for weekly storytelling and then share stories across your other social networks linking back to your blog. If you don't have a blog, simply create the stories and share them directly on the appropriate social media platforms.

Here are some ideas to get you going:

- Why or how your company was founded
- How your product is made
- Employee highlights
- Customer features or testimonials (require approval from the customer to be shared publicly)
- Company traditions or values
- Stories of inspiration

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<sup>9</sup> (Milbrath 2014)

### B. Lists

There are even more possibilities for content creation aside from your company story. Ask yourself, “If I were my target audience, what would I want to see?” Go back to your research gathered in step 2 and feature content that drives interaction in your industry. Lists are a great way to do this.

Here are some more ideas to help you get started:

- What are your FAQs? Feature each one in a separate post or a collection in a list-style post
- What questions should your customers be asking that they aren’t? Feature those questions and answers in a list
- Lists connected to the use of your product (think about your product in different settings or for different audiences, and then generate different kinds of lists)
- Things that might surprise your audience about your founders/employees/business
- Lists specific to your audiences needs and interests
- Historical lists related to the founding of your business or major milestones for your product

Lists can also be broken up into smaller categories – you get more content for your ideas by doing it this way. Split up your lists and distribute them over the course of a month (e.g. every Friday) then use a hashtag to categorize the lists. Remember, your lists should have enticing titles!

### C. Visual Content

Don’t reinvent the wheel; if you have already told the story, find a new way to tell it! Take photos, make videos, turn it into an infographic – the options for visual content on social media are endless. Research shows that visual content out performs text-only content, so be creative!

Photo/Video ideas:

- Tell the story of your business/product with a slideshow or short video
- Product in action
- The business in action
- Behind-the-scenes photos
- Introduce or highlight an employee
- Introduce a loyal customer
- Tutorials
- Celebrate a holiday or company milestone
- Commemorate a historical marker with a #TBT (throwback Thursday) post
- Put a quote on a picture
- Create a meme
- Funny video or gif
- Interview a customer, employee, or industry expert
- Promote a contest or giveaway
- Promote an upcoming event, share photos/video from a recent event
- Go live!
- Create a photo album to share
- Use creative apps to further enhance your visual stories

## D. Interactive Content

Interactive content requires your audience to do more than view your post – it asks them to engage! You can use your social media platforms to conduct surveys, create polls, host discussions, feature Q&A sessions, quiz your audience, and hold contests. It's fairly easy to make your current content interactive. For example, take a list you posted last week and create a quiz this week that quizzes your audience on the information from the list (also, provide a link to the original list to increase your click-through rates).

## IV. Content Type 2: Shared Content

### A. Share Articles

Articles are fairly easy to find and you can automate your search by setting up a Google alert for specific topics. Look for articles that address industry standards and share the latest industry news or future projections for your industry. You can also use articles to enhance the community aspect of your social media content plan; what will your audience benefit from knowing?

### B. Engage the Influencers

Start by finding and following influencers in your industry. Look for influencers who are relevant to your business and target audience, have a high reach, and match your brand voice. When picking influencers, look at the engagement levels on their posts; you want an influencer with a loyal following.<sup>10</sup> Spend time learning about them and interacting with their posts to establish a relationship. If you choose to reach out, do it in a private way (email, direct message, etc.) and use your business account or email for contact. Influencers come at a cost, so budget accordingly. Partnering with an influencer who is up-and-coming can be a great way to save cost and tap into a new audience.

There are lots of ways to develop fruitful partnerships and secure great content once you've identified influencers in your industry. Send them your product and be intentional in your packaging. Many influencers doing a product review will start with the unboxing! You can also collaborate on a giveaway, have them share their tips for using your product better, or simply include your product in one of their lifestyle posts. Hubspot has a comprehensive article about influencers:

<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/how-to-work-with-influencers>

### C. Join the Industry

Sometimes the best shared content comes from within your industry. Join groups on LinkedIn and Facebook that relate to your industry. You can also subscribe to YouTube and Snapchat channels that feature videos that your customers may find beneficial. On Instagram you can search and follow hashtags using key words to find content that might inspire or educate your audience. Typically, when you are joining a group or subscribing to another page, it is with your target audiences in mind. Always be listening to your industry to keep your keywords, hashtags, and content current.

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<sup>10</sup> (Hootsuite 2019)



### D. Promote your Community

Use your social media pages to promote other community events. This relates back to the human aspect of a customer-centered approach to SMMP. You are a real business with a real location, don't be afraid to highlight the great things you are doing in and for your community. Local businesses can especially benefit from community partnerships, fundraisers, and other community events.

### E. Share Data

Stay up to date in your industry and keep your audience informed by sharing the latest research and data on your social media pages. You can share infographics and posters or use industry experts' content to educate your audience.

## V. Content Type 3: User-Generated Content (UGC)

Always ask permission to share UGC. A simple comment on the post will do the job! If a user says yes, make sure that you tag the original creator when you share the content on your own pages.

- Hootsuite has a great guide to UGC: <https://blog.hootsuite.com/user-generated-content-ugc/>
- SproutSocial also has a helpful resource: <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/user-generated-content-guide/>

### A. Use Company-Specific Hashtags

One of the best ways to search for content related to your business is to create a company-specific hashtag (You can just make up a hashtag! Check first to see if someone is already using it).

Use the hashtag in your own posts and then write a call to action asking your audience to use that hashtag in their own content. For example, "Show us how you put our product to use by using #ourcompany!" You can also use this strategy across your marketing plan – put the hashtags in your email communications, on your mailers, and in the physical packaging if you ship directly to your consumers.

Your users will start to include these hashtags in their posts, creating user-generated content, as they interact with your business and products. Use the search feature on the appropriate platform to find UGC related to your brand and company by searching the specific hashtag or mentions of your product/business.

### B. Use a Giveaway/Contest

Giveaways and contests are a great way to incentivize UGC. You can have the giveaway confined to one post, with your followers sharing photos in the comments section. You can also put contest-specific hashtags to work by asking your followers to share their stories, snap a photo, or create a quick video that includes the hashtag (which you can then search to find a winner). Another popular tactic is to ask your followers to tag a friend or capture a photo. There are a lot great ideas for contests available on Hootsuite: <https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-contest/>.

## VI. Connect your Content to your Target Audience

This worksheet is designed to help you think about your audience in tandem with the content you create or share. Some of the content you post will be directly aligned with one persona, while others will meet the needs of several of your target audience profiles. It is recommended that you complete one worksheet per persona.

*A process note for completing worksheet 8: personas were established on worksheet 4.*

<b>Worksheet 8 : Target Audience and Content Creation</b>	
<b>Persona 1 Target Market Statement:</b>	
<u><b>Persona Details:</b></u>	<u><b>Content Ideas:</b></u>
Demographics <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Age</li><li>• Gender</li><li>• Education</li><li>• Occupation</li><li>• Etc.</li></ul>	
Behaviors <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>	
Interests <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>	
Needs/Goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>	

### VII. Additional Resources for Creating Content

#### General Guides to Content Creation and Content Ideas:

- <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-image-sizes-guide/>
- <https://www.convinceandconvert.com/content-marketing/content-to-fill-calendar/>
- <https://buffer.com/resources/social-media-storytelling>
- <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-ideas/>
- <https://blogs.constantcontact.com/what-to-post-social-media/>
- <https://www.lyfemarketing.com/blog/social-media-marketing-ideas/>
- <http://sproutsocial.com/insights/free-image-creation-tools/>
- <http://www.businessnewsdaily.com/7552-pinterest-business-guide.html>
- <https://blog.bufferapp.com/how-often-post-social-media>
- <http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/linkedin-content-marketing>
- <http://www.forbes.com/sites/jaysondemers/2014/06/25/100-killer-ideas-for-your-social-media-content/>
- <http://www.quicksprout.com/2015/08/14/17-tools-thatll-take-your-social-media-marketing-results-to-the-next-level/>

#### Visual Content Ideas:

- <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/instagram-video-examples#sm.0001hl4c2712w1dxfq0nghd607m3u>
- <https://about.easil.com/social-media-images/>
- <https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/how-to-improve-instagram-photos/>
- <https://buffer.com/library/social-media-design-tips>
- <https://www.format.com/magazine/resources/design/social-media-graphics>

#### Helpful Apps and Tools:

- [www.piktochart.com](http://www.piktochart.com)
- <https://pablo.buffer.com/>
- [www.canva.com](http://www.canva.com)
- [www.prezi.com](http://www.prezi.com)
- [www.animoto.com](http://www.animoto.com)
- <https://sproutsocial.com/landscape>
- <https://spark.adobe.com/>
- <https://blog.hootsuite.com/resources-to-create-quick-and-beautiful-images-for-social-media/>
- <https://buffer.com/resources/social-media-apps>
- <https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/7-mobile-apps-create-quality-visual-content/>

## VIII. Post Frequency

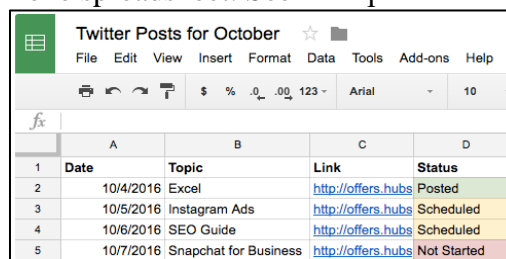
There isn't a frequency standard but a lot of research has been conducted to determine success related to timing and frequency across multiple social media platforms. Buffer, a content management system, offers a helpful guide for determining the frequency with which you should be posting content: <https://blog.bufferapp.com/how-often-post-social-media>.

Platform	Posts Per Day/Per Week	Popular Content Type
Facebook	5-10 per week	Videos, images, articles, text
Twitter	About 5 per day, not including responses to customer FAQs	Text, images, articles, videos
LinkedIn	1 per day; no weekends	Articles, videos, blogs, text
Instagram	About 1 per day	Images, videos
Pinterest	At least 5 per day	Images, articles, blogs
Snapchat	Multiple times per day	Images, video

Assess your platform analytics to determine what times of the day you should be posting content. It will take some experimenting at first, but you will quickly find that there are optimal times throughout the day when posts reach peak user engagement. It is also likely that these times will vary across platforms. Try to customize your postings to the platform activity times. And by all means, use a content management system like Hootsuite or Buffer to help you do this more efficiently!

## IX. Content Calendar

The primary purpose of the content calendar is to help you organize your content in two-week increments. This helps you diversify the content you share as well as prepare for upcoming events, holidays, and campaigns. Keep the post frequency in mind when creating the content calendar – you will not have content for all platforms on all days. Also use your audience metrics to post content on days/times that your audience is online. [Google Sheets](#) is a great tool to use for a content calendar if you are working with a team of people because it can be updated live without having to email back and forth. A content calendar worksheet is provided on the next page and here is a [sample](#), but feel free to create your own calendar that reflects your working style. Another option is a content tracker. Choosing this style of content calendar allows you to track content related to a single platform using multiple tabs on one spreadsheet. See Hubspot's example below:



Twitter Posts for October			
1	Date	Topic	Status
2	10/4/2016	Excel	Posted
3	10/5/2016	Instagram Ads	Scheduled
4	10/6/2016	SEO Guide	Scheduled
5	10/7/2016	Snapchat for Business	Not Started

Source: <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/social-media-calendar-tools>

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<b>Worksheet 9: Content Calendar</b>							
<b>Week 1</b>							
Platform:	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Facebook							
Instagram							
Twitter							
LinkedIn							
YouTube							
Snapchat							
Pinterest							
<b>Week 2</b>							
Platform:	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Facebook							
Instagram							
Twitter							
LinkedIn							
YouTube							
Snapchat							
Pinterest							



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### Step 7: Measure Success

*“Social media is a channel, not an activity. You can’t measure a channel, you have to measure the activity (or content) which you communicate on that channel.”*

*- Jeff Berezny, founder of Tent Social*

The purpose of setting SMART goals and creating content related to those goals is to measure your social media ROI. You are spending a lot of time and resources to create your social media marketing plan; being able to quantify your return on investment is critical not only for justifying your efforts, but also for determining where your resources are best spent.

Take a quick minute to look at the bigger picture of your social media marketing strategy as it relates to measuring your return on investment:

Measuring Social Media ROI		
Step 1	Identify clear challenges and areas of growth related to social media marketing	Worksheets 1-5
Step 2	Define SMART goals and identify clear action steps to achieve these goals	Worksheet 6
Step 3	Aggregate data and appropriate metrics to measure success	Worksheet 10
Step 4	Assess if you have met or are on track for your goals by asking key questions related to your goals in order to quantify your ROI	Worksheet 11

So how do you gather the right metrics? Measuring the success of your social media strategy will depend on the goals that you set on worksheet 6. Luckily, many of your social media platforms and management tools have tracking services already built in. Platform insights are your best means for collecting data and a great place to start if you have limited resources and time. There are also a variety of analytical tools available for a monthly fee. For example, URL shorteners like bit.ly or bl.in come with tracking services so that you can track how many clicks you receive on a URL (these are called click-through rates). You can also use Google Analytics to track page visits driven by social media content to your blog or website. Content management systems also analyze data like followers, engagement, click-through rates, etc. to better measure your social influence. Whatever analytical tools you use, make sure you are collecting the right metrics for your social media goals.

Looking to analyze more robust metrics? Here are some resources to get you started:

- <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-analytics-tools/>
- <https://keyhole.co/blog/list-of-the-top-25-social-media-analytics-tools/>
- <https://www.brandwatch.com/blog/top-social-media-monitoring-tools/>

Use worksheet 10 to organize your goals, measurements, and results. Ideally, you’ll complete worksheet 10 each reporting period. The table on the following page outlines simple goals and related data metrics. [Hootsuite<sup>11</sup>](https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-metrics/) also offers a robust guide for social media metrics.

<sup>11</sup> <https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-metrics/>

Goal:	Data Needed for Measurement:
Increase followers	<p>Set a benchmark date and measure followers from that date to next reporting period.</p> <p>Example time period: May 1<sup>st</sup> – June 1<sup>st</sup></p> <p>Determine the <u>percent increase</u><sup>12</sup> of your followers during this time.</p>
Increase engagement	<p>Set a benchmark date for engagement data (likes, shares, comments) and measure engagement from that date to next reporting period.</p> <p>Example time period: May 1<sup>st</sup> – June 1<sup>st</sup>.</p> <p>Determine the percent increase (or decrease) of your overall engagement during this time.</p> <p>To measure average engagement: divide percent change by total number of followers.</p>
Increase quality of content	<p>Measure average daily engagement over an extended period of time and measure average daily engagement after another extended period of time.</p> <p>Example time period: Average engagement from January-May of last year vs. average engagement from January-May of this year.</p> <p>Determine the percent increase/decrease in engagement during this time.</p>
Diversify content or audience	<p>Set a benchmark date for measurement and then measure again at next reporting period.</p> <p>Example time period: May 1<sup>st</sup> – August 1<sup>st</sup>.</p> <p>Use bar charts or pie charts to demonstrate content/audience changes during designated time period.</p>
Increase approval actions (applause rate)	<p>Set a benchmark date and measure approval actions from that date to next reporting period.</p> <p>Example time period: May 1<sup>st</sup> – June 1<sup>st</sup></p> <p>Add up total approval actions (likes, favorites) that top posts receive and divide by total number of followers; divide that number by 100 to get applause rate percentage.</p>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TpZXX-GsmB0>



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*A process note for completing worksheet 10: goals and action plans were established on worksheet 6.*

<b>Worksheet 10: Measure Success</b>			
<b>Goal 1:</b>			
	<b>Data needed:</b>	<b>Results:</b>	<b>Next Steps:</b>
<b>Action Plan 1 for goal 1:</b>			
<b>Action Plan 2 for goal 1:</b>			
<b>Action Plan 3 for goal 1:</b>			
<b>Goal 2:</b>			
	<b>Data needed:</b>	<b>Results:</b>	<b>Next Steps:</b>
<b>Action Plan 1 for goal 2:</b>			
<b>Action Plan 2 for goal 2:</b>			
<b>Action Plan 3 for goal 2:</b>			
<b>Goal 3:</b>			
	<b>Data needed:</b>	<b>Results:</b>	<b>Next Steps:</b>
<b>Action Plan 1 for goal 3:</b>			
<b>Action Plan 2 for goal 3:</b>			
<b>Action Plan 3 for goal 3:</b>			

Worksheet 10 in action:

Worksheet 10: Measure Success			
Goal 1: Increase social media presence			
	Data needed:	Results:	Next Steps:
<b>Action Plan 1 for goal 1:</b> Increase followers on Facebook	Starting followers at benchmark date and new follower count at end of reporting period	% increase/decrease	Increase followers by 25 by next reporting period
<b>Action Plan 2 for goal 1:</b> Increase engagement on Instagram	Average engagement prior to benchmark date and average engagement at end of reporting period	% increase/decrease	Increase engagement by 5% by next reporting period
<b>Action Plan 3 for goal 1:</b> Increase quality of content on YouTube	Average engagement per day prior to benchmark date and average engagement at end of reporting period	% increase/decrease	Action plan met, create new action plan on worksheet 6
Goal 2: Reach a more diverse audience			
	Data needed:	Results:	Next Steps:
<b>Action Plan 1 for goal 2:</b> Diversify audience on Facebook	Audience demographics at benchmark date; audience demographics at end of reporting period	Bar charts/pie charts demonstrating audience demographics	Continue to post content for a broader audience
<b>Action Plan 2 for goal 2:</b> Increase individual post reach	Starting popular post reach at benchmark date and new popular post reach at end of reporting period	% increase/decrease	Increase most popular post reach by 5% by next reporting period
<b>Action Plan 3 for goal 2:</b> Diversify content to reach a broader audience	Content types at benchmark date; content types at end of reporting period	Bar charts/pie charts demonstrating content mix	Determine content type with most engagement

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Worksheet 11 provides an opportunity to reflect on the results from worksheet 10 with your return on investment as the primary focus of your reflection.

<b>Worksheet 11: ROI Analysis</b>	
Questions:	Narrative Reflection:
How far is my message spreading?	
How many people are talking about my brand?	
Which platforms are getting the most engagement?	
What types of content generate the most reach?	
Who is participating in the conversations and what influence do they have?	
Are people visiting my website through social media platforms? If so, which ones?	
How much am I contributing to industry conversations?	
What kind of feedback am I getting from my followers? How do I know my followers find my content valuable?	
Am I employing the social media rule of thirds?	
How much time am I spending curating content for each platform? Do the results demonstrate that I'm moving closer to meeting my goals?	
On average, how much time am I putting toward my SMMP each reporting period?	
How much money am I spending monthly on content creation, management tools, and social media ads? Do my results justify these costs?	
Where can I cut costs? Where can I afford to add costs?	



### Step 8: Monitor and Adjust Your Social Media Marketing Plan

Determine how often you will measure your success (every week, every month, twice a month, etc.) and use these reports to monitor the success of your SMMP. If it helps you, graph the results to get a visual representation of your social media goals and measurements. Highlight key areas of success as well as failed goals to track the progress of your marketing campaigns. Again, ask yourself key questions. For example, “Do the results in step 7 meet my established goals? Do they exceed my expectations? Where did I succeed and where did I fall flat? Is my content having the impact that I want?”

Once you’ve answered these questions and analyzed the metrics of your social media platforms, you are ready to adjust the original plan. Create new goals if necessary, keep working toward existing goals if they weren’t met, find new ways to drive engaging content, and respond to new challenges as they appear. Your social media marketing plan should be an active process. Spend time monitoring your platforms, measuring your influence, and adjusting when necessary.



(Source: socialmediadata.com)



A customer-centered approach to social media relies on authenticity and building content that benefits your customers. As such, ethical social media practices are crucial for maintaining your brand's integrity.

#### I. Primary Legal Issues

##### A. Terms of Service Agreements

You should always read the terms of service (TOS) agreements for each platform used in your SMMP. Each TOS “clearly states what a user (or business) can and cannot do on the respective social media site...some platforms (e.g., Instagram and Snapchat) state that the content that is shared and created on these sites is technically owned by the platform, whereas others (e.g., LinkedIn) state that the users own the content they share and create on social media.”<sup>13</sup> Terms of service statements are always evolving and it is best practice to stay up-to-date.

##### B. Censorship

Social media platforms also take into account censorship around issues of free speech. Each platform has different guidelines for how it handles hate, obscenity, misinformation, and harassment. The [First Amendment Center](#)<sup>14</sup> has a handy guide that summarizes each platform's policy on censorship.

##### C. Privacy

The Federal Trade Commission regulates the amount of data collected by social media sites pertaining to individual user information. As for your business' social media strategy, questions of privacy are more often concerned with your policies related to account ownership and access to employees' accounts who regularly post content for your business.

##### D. Copyright Infringement

Copyright infringement “may involve the author of a work, a photographer, a videographer, a musician who created the music used in a video, TV footage, the creator of artwork, or a visual content creator.”<sup>15</sup> Most social media sites allow copyrighted content to be posted on their platforms, however you should always be diligent to credit the original source of content when posting shared content and ask permission (and then credit) when reposting UGC. Many of the creation tools shared on page 37 allow you to use images and music available in the universal public domain. Check out the resources below if you want to further understand issues surrounding copyright and social media:

- <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/copyrights-and-social-media-issues-397821>
- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/oliverherzfeld/2016/05/26/fair-use-in-the-age-of-social-media/#3849b18c3300>

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<sup>13</sup> (Freberg 2019)

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.freedomforuminstitute.org/first-amendment-center/primers/free-expression-on-social-media/>

<sup>15</sup> (Freberg 2019)

- <https://socialmedia.colostate.edu/copyright/>

## II. Ethics

There are a number of ethical issues around social media. Some of these will be specific to your social media policy (discussed in section 7), while others are universal to all businesses using social media as part of their marketing strategy.

### A. Misappropriating trends

Each platform has trending topics on any given day. It can be tempting to jump into the conversation using the trending hashtags and search terms. However, if the topic isn't relevant to your business or audience, this can be an unethical social media practice. Consider your brand voice as well as the context and emotions around the topic before deciding to engage in trending conversations.

### B. Abandoning engagement

Building content is 2/3 of your social media practice, engagement is the final 1/3. It is hard to be authentic and customer-centric if you are not engaging when customers ask questions, post comments, or share complaints on your content. Use every customer interaction as an opportunity to build community. Another form of abandonment is when you leave a platform for extended periods of time. It is better to fully remove (or make inactive) an inefficient business page than leave old content on an outdated page.

### C. Not diversifying content

This has been said previously but it bears repeating: do not post the same content on all platforms at the same time. This oversaturates your platforms and fails to consider audiences as they relate to platform demographics. For the most part, your content should be specific to the audience and platform, not generalized for all audiences on all platforms.

### D. Sharing too much

Strike a balance between being transparent and professional. It is important to share updates with your customers, but social media is generally not a place to discuss failures, political alliances, and negative interactions. There are some exceptions here, but overall, use your social media accounts to build a positive community around your brand.

### E. Failing to give credit

Always give credit to the original content creator if you are posting shared or user-generated content. If you have paid a creator for your business content (e.g., videos or photos) you can choose whether or not you credit them. However, it can be valuable to your brand to highlight partnerships and feature content creators.



## A Guide to Social Media Marketing for Small Businesses

### F. Automating social media content

Content management tools are extremely helpful, but social media does not work with a leave-it and forget-it approach.

*“...automated responses are impersonal and not really about connecting on a relationship basis with another person. Automation can also pose a challenge and risk if a business or professional sends automated updates when others may not want to see them (like during a natural disaster incident or breaking news). With automation you lose the personal exchanges and conversations that make social media a great place to network and communicate.”*

- Social Media for Strategic Communication: Creative Strategies and Research-Based Applications

### G. Interacting with influencers

Endorsements and content created by influencers should disclose that the content was created as part of a partnership if the influencer is being paid to promote your business. Something as simple as adding #ad to the content can alert audiences that you have collaborated with an influencer to promote your brand. However, sometimes influencers share reviews or information about your brand voluntarily, this type of post does not need any transparency because the promotion is authentic.



Whether your company is one person or many, you should develop a social media policy that guides your decisions and actions when navigating social media networks. This policy is two-fold; first, how your company will manage its accounts and second, how your company will communicate with audiences across its platforms.

#### I. Things to Consider within the Company

**Who is allowed to post?** Create a specific set of guidelines for who is allowed to post to your social media accounts and who is allowed to respond to customers. These may be the same person; if not, these people need to work together to ensure that your brand voice remains consistent across platforms.

**Who is responsible for our social media accounts and content?** The platform is not responsible for an error; the poster is responsible for using the channel ineffectively or posting inappropriate content. If something goes wrong, have a plan in place for fixing the error and responding appropriately. Designate someone to have the final authority on content and also designate someone to oversee that your social media policy is being followed – these may be the same person.

**How will we train our social media posters?** Once you've established the brand voice, training will help your employees maintain that brand voice across platforms. At minimum, provide posters with company hashtags, industry terms, and answers to FAQ's generated by customers. Provide Internet safety training and review any legal issues with employees – this might include restrictions linking their personal accounts to the company or posting confidential information about your company, products, or brand.

**Are we following the law?** Make sure anyone posting to your social media accounts is following the law and representing your brand in a professional manner. Employees should be aware of things like “terms of service, sharing of copyright content, disclosure of confidential information, privacy... [and] respect for others.”<sup>16</sup>

**What are they allowed to post?** Write a general policy that provides guidelines for content across different platforms. Focus on best practices, not on specifics. These should mirror your goals discussed in section 4 and the objectives of your social media marketing plan. An example of a general policy would be, “when posting company news, make sure that the news has been released publicly and is accurate.” Try to frame your guidelines positively, outlining what the employee can do when posting on behalf of the company.

**Who owns the content within the company?** Your company owns the content as long as the poster is creating content on behalf of the company and posting it across company-owned platforms. For example, you can list the employee as the author of a blog post, but ultimately, your company owns that content. Designate whether or not posters can use their created content as part of their professional portfolio and create a plan of action for past posts created by former employees. It is

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<sup>16</sup> (Freberg 2019)

recommended that you leave their content posted, since you were willing to credit the author originally. Plus, more content is better for search engine optimization.

**What do we do about privileged information?** Depending on the nature of your business, you might need to create specific guidelines related to privileged information. For example, anything that violates doctor-patient privilege or responses to legal problems cannot be shared on social media. Instead, redirect the commenter to the appropriate place where they can legally get an answer. Delete the confidential information and post why the information was deleted with something simple. For example, “this comment is private and has been redirected to \_\_\_\_.”

**Can employees link personal content to the company?** Don’t require employees to like or share company pages and posts – you will run into trouble with the National Labor Relations Review Board. With this in mind, create general guidelines for employees’ personal accounts and company social media accounts. For example, “when posting content on personal social media accounts, please refrain from linking this information to the company.”

**When do we communicate the policy with employees?** At the creation of the policy and at the onboarding of new employees. This policy will directly affect their social media actions, communicate it clearly and have open conversations about expectations related to social media activity.

**How often do we review our policy?** It is recommended that you review your policy every six months.<sup>17</sup> This will help you stay on top of the ever-changing social media landscape.

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<sup>17</sup> (Jones 2012)

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### II. Things to Consider when Communicating with Customers across Platforms

**Is it authentic?** Posters should be transparent about who they are and how they are connected to the company. Social media is about building relationships – these only happen with real people! An authentic voice should be present in all social media communication. Do not create generic, formulaic responses to customer questions and feedback.

**Is it respectful?** Be respectful of your customers, industry, and competitors. Do not disclose customer information without their permission; this includes their names, associations, and testimonials. Be respectful of industry experts and do not speak poorly of competitors on social media platforms.

**Is it truthful?** Check your facts and then check them again, credit any sources that are connected to posted content. Check with colleagues and customers before posting information related to them.

**Is it timely?** Respond to customers in a timely manner. Also, be aware of company policies regarding publishing of time sensitive information (product release dates, for example).

**Is it ethical?** Does the content match the mission and values of your company? Would you say this or act this way in person? Have a moral compass when posting content on social media platforms. Consider whether or not you are violating anyone's privacy or making a harmful statement toward a person or group of people. Consider the ramifications of your content – does your content make an unintended (or intended) political statement that will isolate any of your customers?



Hopefully you have a clear understanding of how social media can impact your business positively and help you better communicate with customers and influencers in your industry. Spend some time doing research on what platforms will benefit your business and how you can use social media to increase your brand voice, then start developing your social media marketing plan. Conduct valuable research, set clear goals, and create engaging content. Measure your success and adjust accordingly. Below is a collection of additional resources to help you create a strong social media presence for your business.

#### **Measuring ROI:**

- <http://blog.hootsuite.com/measure-social-media-roi-business/>
- <http://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-roi-guide/>
- <https://blog.bufferapp.com/guide-calculate-social-media-roi>

#### **Developing a Social Media Policy:**

- <http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/nonprofit-questions-to-ask-social-media-policy-list>
- <http://socialmedia.biz/social-media-policies/best-practices-for-developing-a-social-media-policy/>

#### **Successful Company Examples:**

- <http://smallbiztrends.com/2014/07/best-social-media-marketing-examples.html>
- <http://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-campaign-ideas/>
- <http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/successful-social-media-campaigns/>

Don't be afraid to ask questions and try new things – you won't know what works until you try it. Be careful not to over plan; sometimes people get stuck in the planning phase and never move to the implementation phase. Social media is active and it happens in real time, so you can't afford to miss out on great opportunities because you were busy creating "the perfect content." It doesn't have to be perfect, but it needs to be professional, accurate, and authentic to your brand. It's time to implement your social media marketing plan!





## A Guide to Social Media Marketing for Small Businesses

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### Appendix A: Tips for the Most Popular Platforms

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This section serves as a general guide to the most popular social networks for small businesses. It is recommended that you create personal profiles on the platforms that you want to use for your business before managing a company page. This will help you learn how to navigate the social network and gain a better understanding of how each platform is designed for consumer interaction, which is imperative to social media marketing. It will be much easier to manage a business social media marketing plan once you feel more comfortable navigating each site.

*Note: It is recommended that you provide links to all of your social media accounts on your website.*

## I. Facebook

Facebook makes it easy for businesses to establish their presence on its site with its Facebook page feature. To better explain this Facebook states, “Your page is an extension of your business. It’s an easy way to share updates and more with the people who matter most.”<sup>18</sup> Your company Facebook page acts as a home for your brand on this platform, making it easy for new and current customers to find your business. Find more: [www.facebook.com/business/overview](http://www.facebook.com/business/overview).

**Q:** Who should use Facebook?

**A:** Businesses with frequent customer interaction, ideally B2C\* companies or B2B companies with strong industry presence on Facebook.

Facebook has a wealth of information available at the business link above. Key places to start exploring include Facebook’s [free courses](#)<sup>19</sup> and tutorials on [ads](#)<sup>20</sup> and [insights](#)<sup>21</sup>.

Some general marketing ideas for Facebook:

- Use a creative cover photo (this can also be a video!)
- Set up events
- Make use of the call to action button on your page
- Create industry or product-specific groups and invite your customers
- Join industry groups in order to stay up to date and share content
- Use Facebook Live strategically to announce events, kick-off campaigns, etc.
- Boost your popular posts to get them in front a larger audience

Content ideas specific to Facebook:

- <https://kimgarst.com/17-killer-facebook-post-ideas-for-small-business-owners/>
- <https://kimgarst.com/top-22-ways-to-use-facebook-live-to-market-your-business/>
- <https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/how-to-use-facebook-groups-for-your-brand-or-business/538437/>
- <https://www.postplanner.com/facebook-post-ideas-for-businesses-that-guarantee-engagement/>
- <https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2016/03/08/facebook-marketing-ideas>

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<sup>18</sup> (Facebook 2015)

\* BTB = Business to Business; B2C = Business to Consumer

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/business/learn>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/business/tools/ads-manager>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/business/insights>

### II. Instagram

Think of Instagram as a visual platform where you create the visual identity of your business and brand. Instagram users focus on the aesthetics of their content by capturing unique images and then using filters, frames, and special effects to enhance these images. Instagram users are privy to the artistic elements found in everyday things. On Instagram, a picture really is worth a thousand words.

**Q:** Who Should Use Instagram?

**A:** Creative businesses with an eye for design or with products that are best captured visually (e.g., lifestyle, food, fashion, etc.). Instagram is also valuable for businesses that want to connect with end users in innovative ways.

Access the [Instagram business page](#)<sup>22</sup> to find out how other brands are succeeding on the platform, learn about business resources, and get inspired.

Some general marketing ideas for Instagram:

- Create a description that matches your brand voice and aesthetic
- Recommend a hashtag in your description
- [Embed](#)<sup>23</sup> your Instagram content on your website
- Assess your Instagram content for [color cohesion](#)<sup>24</sup>
- Organize your posts into topic categories
- Use hashtags and keywords when adding captions to your images
- Use the stories feature and to change up your content
- Follow industry leaders by searching hashtags
- Regram UGC

Content ideas specific to Instagram:

- <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/how-to-regram/>
- <https://www.planthat.com/30-days-instagram-content-ideas/>
- <https://blog.hootsuite.com/how-to-use-instagram-for-business/>
- <https://www.agorapulse.com/blog/instagram-content-social-media-managers>
- <https://smallbiztrends.com/2017/04/instagram-post-ideas.html>
- <https://blog.hootsuite.com/instagram-post-ideas/>
- <https://blog.hootsuite.com/instagram-story-ideas/>
- <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/instagram-analytics-tools>

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<sup>22</sup> <https://business.instagram.com/inspiration/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://help.instagram.com/169948159813228/>

<sup>24</sup> <http://myinstapalette.com/>

### III. YouTube

YouTube is the leading platform for the creation and distribution of videos with over 1 billion users. YouTube was launched in 2005 and is now owned by Google, making it easier than ever to incorporate YouTube videos on your other social media platforms. Overall it is a valuable social platform for business, but this is the most important reason: YouTube videos are over 50% more likely to appear on the first page in search results, maximizing your company's visibility on the web.

Your YouTube channel should not be full of company ads; instead, use the platform to educate, inform, and entertain your audience.

**Q:** Who should use YouTube?

**A:** Businesses with the time and energy to create and upload how-to tutorials, product reviews, company features, etc.

YouTube has an extremely comprehensive [creators channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkRfArvrzheW2E7b6SVT7vQ)<sup>25</sup> featuring videos for best practices and platform basics. They also highlight up-and-coming creators and feature advice from established creators.

Some general marketing ideas for YouTube:

- Pay attention to accessibility and make sure your content is ADA compliant
- Organize your content into playlists
- Use keywords in your descriptions to increase the likelihood that your videos will appear in Google search results
- Embed your videos on your website or in your newsletters and email communications
- Turn your FAQs into videos!

Content ideas specific to YouTube:

- <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/how-to-create-youtube-account/>
- <https://www.uschamber.com/co/grow/marketing/youtube-marketing-guide-small-business>
- <https://backlinko.com/how-to-rank-youtube-videos>
- <https://animoto.com/blog/video-ideas/youtube-video-ideas/>
- <https://smallbiztrends.com/2017/04/video-ideas-for-youtube.html>
- <https://blog.hootsuite.com/youtube-marketing/>

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkRfArvrzheW2E7b6SVT7vQ>

### IV. Twitter

Twitter thrives on being a live messaging system where users connect and interact in real time, which has made Twitter the go-to platform for updates on events happening around the globe. The company's mission is simple: "To give everyone the power to create and share ideas and information instantly, without barriers."<sup>26</sup>

**Q:** Who should use Twitter?

**A:** Businesses with a strong brand voice and time to devote to customer service and conversations.

Twitter has a helpful [business page](https://business.twitter.com/en/analytcs.html)<sup>27</sup> that walks you through advertising on Twitter and understanding your [analytics](https://business.twitter.com/en/analytcs.html)<sup>28</sup>. Twitter also has a [business blog](https://business.twitter.com/en/blog.html)<sup>29</sup> with articles around best practices and helpful insights.

Some general marketing ideas for Twitter:

- Be creative with your header photo
- Keep hashtags easy and consistent to your brand voice
- Use mentions to connect with influencers and respond to customers
- Stay in the conversation by participating in trending topics (as it relates!)
- Shorten URL links to save character space
- Familiarize yourself with Twitter lingo

Content ideas specific to Twitter:

- <https://business.twitter.com/en/analytcs.html>
- <https://getgist.com/31-tweet-ideas-for-your-startup/>
- <https://thrivehive.com/10-things-your-small-business-can-tweet-about-today/>
- <https://socialmediaweek.org/blog/2017/03/9-tools-help-quickly-create-better-twitter-content/>
- <https://www.techrepublic.com/article/use-twitter-try-these-5-apps-to-sort-and-discover-different-tweets/>

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<sup>26</sup> (Twitter 2015)

<sup>27</sup> <https://business.twitter.com/en.html>

<sup>28</sup> <https://business.twitter.com/en/analytcs.html>

<sup>29</sup> <https://business.twitter.com/en/blog.html>

## V. LinkedIn

The global reach and professional nature of LinkedIn make it an appealing platform for businesses today. LinkedIn can be divided into two categories: personal profiles and company pages. Personal profiles act as an e-portfolio; you can highlight your job skills, post your resume, feature work samples, etc. It is beneficial to have a personal profile on the network because you can connect with others in your industry and establish a professional presence on the platform. Company pages, on the other hand, are more comprehensive versions of yellow pages. They give your company a landing page on the platform and allow you to link with employees, future employees, and other businesses in your industry.

**Q:** Who should use LinkedIn?

**A:** Business owners and employees looking to network with other owners, employees, and customers in the industry. LinkedIn is especially helpful for B2B companies.

Use LinkedIn's [business page](https://business.linkedin.com/)<sup>30</sup> for a full overview of how this platform can help your business make connections, drive sales, and advertise on its platform.

Some general marketing ideas for LinkedIn:

- Create a company page and invite employees to link to your company page
- Add keywords related to your company and industry in your description to increase the search capability of the platform
- Pick categories that reflect what your business does
- Use the showcases feature to highlight what your company does, products, or community projects/partnerships
- Join an industry group
- Start a group
- Seek out endorsements

Content ideas specific to LinkedIn:

- <https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/how-to-market-on-linkedin>
- <https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/5-essential-linkedin-strategies-for-small-businesses/551366/>
- <https://www.outboundengine.com/blog/10-linkedin-post-ideas-that-you-should-be-doing-right-now/>
- <https://www.disruptiveadvertising.com/social-media/linkedin-superstar/>
- <https://aritic.com/blog/aritic-pinpoint/linkedin-post-ideas/>
- <https://themanifest.com/social-media/6-types-content-you-should-be-sharing-linkedin>

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<sup>30</sup> <https://business.linkedin.com/>

### VI. Snapchat

Snapchat is the new kid on the block who isn't all that new anymore. 203 million Snapchat users spend 30 minutes on the app each day<sup>31</sup>. This is significant audience potential. However, Snapchat's audience is primarily under the age of 34 years old.<sup>32</sup> Another key thing to know about the platform is that stories have a 24-hour shelf life. After 24 hours, content disappears from the platform, making it a platform that needs daily updates but is also very forgiving to casual, unedited content.

**Q:** Who should use Snapchat?

**A:** Businesses looking to connect with a younger demographic in creative, out-of-the box ways using advanced technology and image creation.

Snapchat offers a comprehensive [business page](https://forbusiness.snapchat.com/)<sup>33</sup> with links to advertising, resources, and inspiration.

Some general marketing ideas for Snapchat:

- Create an on-demand geofilter to promote an event or place it at your business location
- Use the stories feature to give a behind-the-scenes look at your business
- Use the stories feature to highlight your brand voice
- Work with an influencer for a takeover day
- Play with filters
- Use it for contests

Content ideas specific to Snapchat:

- <https://www.snapchat.com/create>
- <https://blog.hootsuite.com/snapchat-for-business-guide/>
- <https://blogs.constantcontact.com/ideas-for-snapchat/>
- <https://blog.wishpond.com/post/115675436876/snapchat-marketing-strategies>
- <https://www.sendible.com/insights/snapchat-marketing-for-brands>

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<sup>31</sup> (Snapchat 2019)

<sup>32</sup> (Shleyner 2019)

<sup>33</sup> <https://forbusiness.snapchat.com/>

## VII. Pinterest

Created in 2010, Pinterest was founded as a bookmarking tool to help “people discover the things they love, and inspire them to go do those things in their daily lives.”<sup>34</sup> Pinterest markets itself as a discovery engine, where users discover new products, hobbies, style inspiration, and much more. As a result, the most popular content on Pinterest centers around recipes, fashion, home décor, fitness and health tips, and DIY projects. The interesting thing about Pinterest is that pins don’t necessarily have an expiration date.

**Q:** Who should use Pinterest?

**A:** Businesses in popular Pinterest industries and those with visually appealing products, preexisting social media presence, and a strong B2C focus.

Like the other platforms, Pinterest also has a [business page](#)<sup>35</sup> designed to guide businesses through the advertising and creative process on the platform. They share pins related to business success stories, tips for creating engaging content, and helpful tutorials for reaching your target audience.

Some general marketing ideas for Pinterest:

- Organize your content using boards (think of your personas!)
- Create [rich pins](#)<sup>36</sup>
- Use custom board covers
- Create mission, values, and vision pins
- Add your location to your bio
- Join industry group boards
- Schedule your pins (pinners like Saturdays!)
- Use keywords and hashtags in your pin descriptions

Content ideas specific to Pinterest:

- <https://business.pinterest.com/en/Pinterest-content-tips>
- <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/222294931584240378/>
- <https://www.business2community.com/pinterest/7-stellar-pinterest-board-ideas-you-can-use-right-now-to-grow-your-business-01232628>
- <https://www.postplanner.com/pinterest-board-name-ideas-to-get-more-clicks-pins-followers/>
- <https://www.smamarketing.net/blog/pinterest-seo-best-practices-2018>
- <https://www.growthmachine.com/blog/pinterest-growth>

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<sup>34</sup> (Pinterest 2015)

<sup>35</sup> <https://business.pinterest.com/en>

<sup>36</sup> <https://help.pinterest.com/en/business/article/rich-pins>



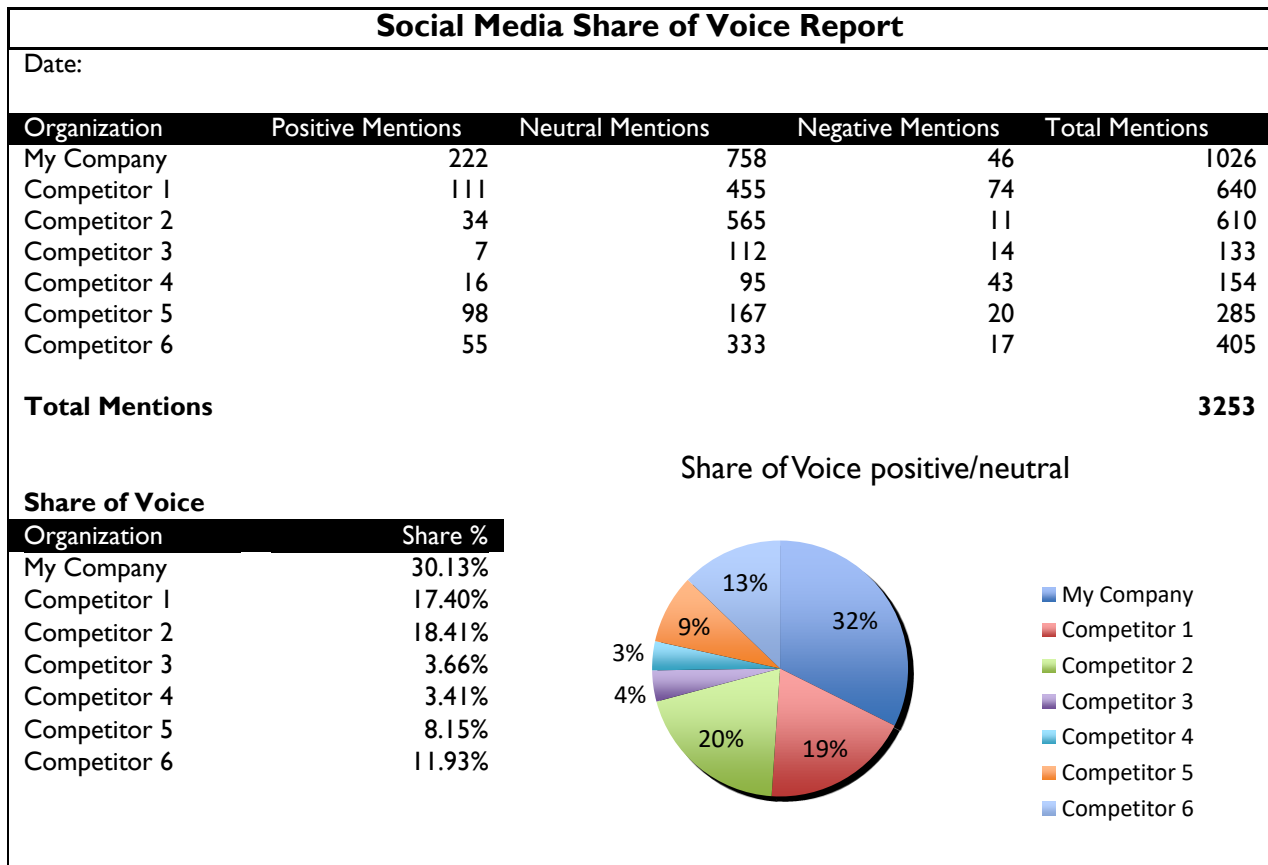
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### Appendix B: Share of Voice Report

Use the data gathered during the listening process (step 2 of the social media marketing plan) to calculate the share of voice and sentiment surrounding your brand, products, and business. Measure the **sentiment** by assigning numerical values to negative, neutral, and positive mentions of the data. It's easiest to calculate these on a five-point scale; where 1 is a negative mention, 3 is a neutral mention, and 5 is a positive mention. These numbers will provide you with the overall feel (or sentiment) of messages surrounding your brand, products, and business. They will also help you see the sentiment surrounding your competitors. Track these mentions for your company and competitors to get a comprehensive view of your **share of voice** in the industry.

To find your share of voice, “divide the number of conversations or mentions of your brand by the total number of conversations or mentions about other brands in your market.”<sup>37</sup>

$$\text{Share of Voice} = \frac{\text{Positive Mentions} + \text{Neutral Mentions}}{\text{Total Mentions}}$$



(Source: [www.convinceandconvert.com](http://www.convinceandconvert.com))

<sup>37</sup> (Sarah-Jayne Gratton 2012)



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