

Social Media Marketing

FEEDS, GROWTH, AND REPORTING



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Introduction

Social media continues to grow in popularity each year, consistently changing and evolving over time. Despite initial hesitation, more and more marketers are beginning to realize the importance of committing their time and resources toward creating a social media strategy. In fact, currently 96 percent of small-business owners/marketers use social media marketing.



Forty-six percent of B2B marketers are not sure whether or not any social channels have generated revenue for their business. ([MarketingProfs](#))



The number of worldwide social media users is expected to reach 2.5 billion by 2018. ([Statistica](#))



The average social media user maintains five accounts. ([Link Humans](#))



The share of marketing budgets spent on social media is expected to more than double over the next five years, from 11 percent today to 24 percent by 2020. ([The CMO Survey](#))



Social media advertising revenue will reach \$9.8 billion in 2016. ([Link Humans](#))



Ninety percent of young adults (ages 18 to 29) use social media. Thirty-five percent of those over age 65 do. ([Pew Research Center](#))

While today most businesses and marketers understand the value of adopting a social media strategy, being present is not enough. By implementing social media best practices and growth strategies and utilizing metrics, businesses can open new doors to business success.

Social Media Best Practices

Days and Times

As you've probably heard, there's no magic number when it comes to the best days and times to post on social media. This information will heavily depend on your audience; however, there are a few guidelines you can follow to get started.

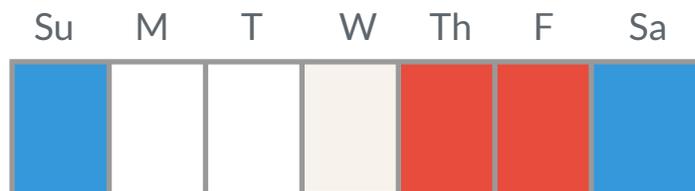
[CoSchedule](#) recently pulled together data and research on the optimal times to post on social media platforms from a variety of sources, including [QuickSprout](#), [The Huffington Post](#), [Buffer](#), [TrackMaven](#), [Fast Company](#), and [Kissmetrics](#).

Here are some general guidelines to help steer you in the right direction:

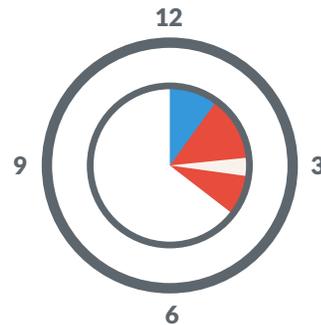


Facebook:

The best times to post on Facebook are 1–4 p.m. late into the week and on weekends.



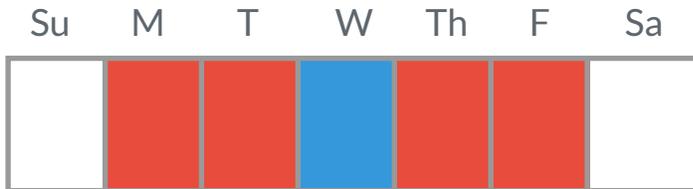
- Saturday and Sunday, 12–1 p.m.
- Thursday and Friday, 1–4 p.m.
- Wednesday at 3 p.m.



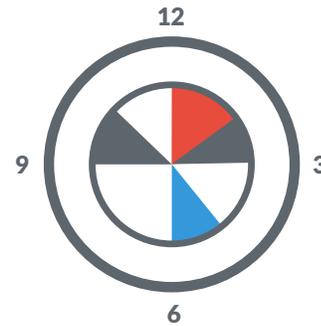


Twitter

The optimal times to tweet are 12–3 p.m., with a peak best time of 5 p.m. During the workweek is the best, though some niches might have more active audiences on the weekend.

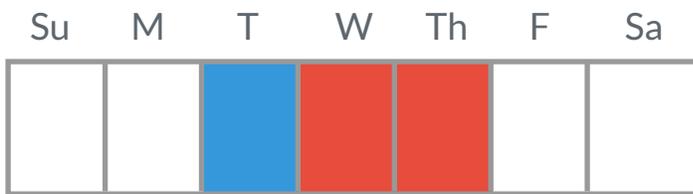


- Wednesday at noon and 5–6 p.m.
- Monday–Friday, 12–3 p.m. and at 5 p.m.
- Experiment with 2–3 a.m., 6–7 a.m., and 9–10 p.m.

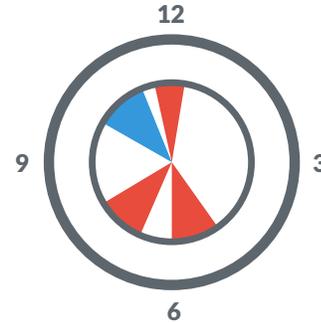


LinkedIn:

Midweek posting is optimal, 5–6 p.m.

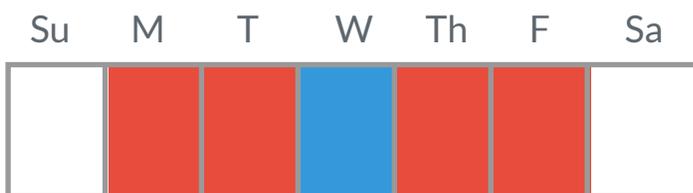


- Tuesday, 10–11 a.m.
- Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 7:30–8:30 a.m., at 12 p.m., and 5–6 p.m.

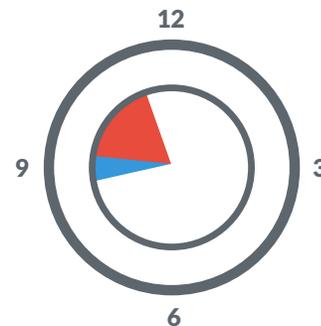


Google+:

The beginning of the workday morning is optimal for Google+.



- Wednesday at 9 a.m.
- Weekdays, 9–11 a.m



Engagement

Monitor and Listen

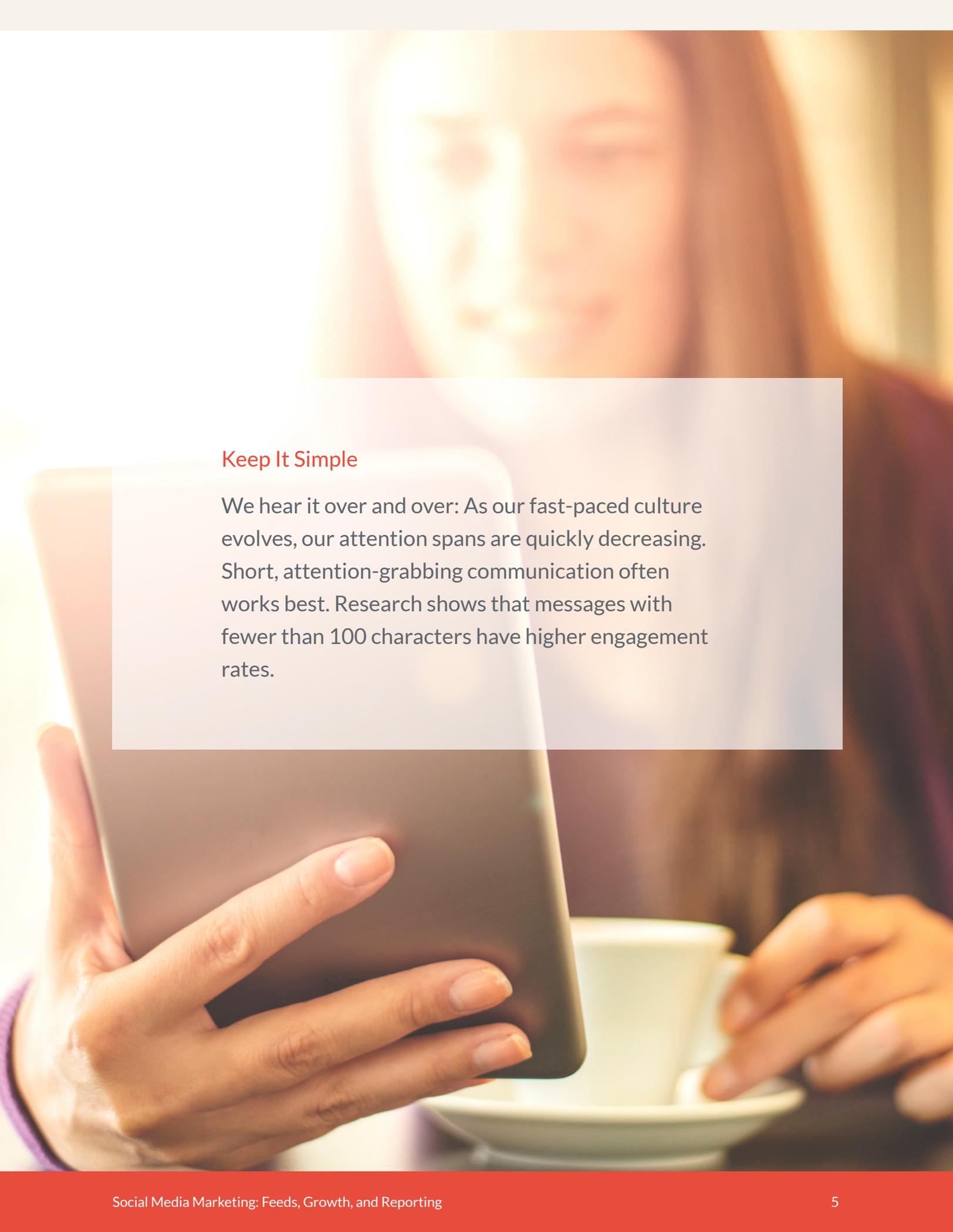
While there's a lot of emphasis placed on publishing, it's equally important to monitor and listen to your audience across social channels. There are many [free tools](#) that allow businesses to set up notifications that alert you when meaningful conversation is taking place on the Web. My favorite tool to keep track of all the noise is [HubSpot's monitoring tool](#). This tool helps you keep track of the conversations that matter to you most. Users can create "streams" in order to filter content on Twitter by contact lists, keywords, hashtags, and more.

As you monitor your social streams, it's important to genuinely listen to what customers are telling you. The information you collect can provide endless insights across your entire team—from sales to support. Listening to your audience on social media can provide insights as to what they're looking for and problems they may be having with your product and can

act as a transparent platform to provide exceptional customer service when issues arise.

Cross-Promotion

There's nothing worse than a user not being able to find your content, and cross-promotion is an easy way to keep that from happening. Linking to your blog, website, and other social networks will create open paths in order to ensure users are able to find everything they are looking for. In order to avoid confusion, keep all your profile names consistent and easy to find. Lastly, give users a reason to follow you on each account you are promoting. Keep in mind: Why would a visitor follow you on Twitter if they're already following you on Facebook? Create a unique value proposition for each network while keeping your brand voice consistent.

A woman with long brown hair is looking at a tablet computer she is holding in her left hand. She is also holding a white coffee cup with her right hand. The background is softly blurred, suggesting an indoor setting with warm lighting.

Keep It Simple

We hear it over and over: As our fast-paced culture evolves, our attention spans are quickly decreasing. Short, attention-grabbing communication often works best. Research shows that messages with fewer than 100 characters have higher engagement rates.

Frequency

“How often should I be publishing content?” is a question I most often hear from business owners, and there is no right answer here. Your publishing frequency will depend on your audience, their appetite, and what you have to say. Buffer [published a study](#) that can act as a general outline; however, you can better learn what works best for your audience on each platform through testing over time.

Social Scheduling

Maintaining an active presence on all your social networks isn't always easy. Using social scheduling tools will help your marketing team greatly save on time and resources. There are many different benefits that come with using social scheduling tools. Here are a few:



Consistency

Marketers can spread out their posts over time, being sure to not overwhelm their followers all at once. If you're suddenly flooded with good post ideas, you can space them out instead of publishing them one after another.



Efficiency

Instead of trying to find bits of time in the day to publish your content, you will find it's much more efficient to block out chunks of time to schedule all your posts at once. This also often encourages more meaningful messaging.



Strategy

If you're currently posting on the fly, there's likely no method to your publishing strategy. Over time, you will develop your own set of “best practices” in regard to days and times your audience is most active. Social scheduling will help you make sure you're taking advantage of these data.



Take a Break

Social scheduling allows you to be active, even when you're off the clock. Is your audience most active at night or on the weekends? Not a problem. Be active even when you're not.

While social scheduling makes sharing across social platforms a breeze, don't let your efforts end there. Scheduling out your social messaging creates a great base for sharing content; however, it's still vital to actively interact with your fans and followers daily. Don't forget to engage in conversations, answer questions, and keep up with the buzz on a regular basis.

Now that we've covered some of the basics, let's dive into the four social networks that B2B marketers should be focusing on: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Google+. In this guide, we will discuss the benefits of each network, growth tactics that you can implement, and do's and don'ts and metrics you should be keeping an eye on.



Why Facebook?

There are more than [1.59 billion monthly active Facebook users](#), which is a 14 percent increase year over year, making it the world's largest social network. At this rate, you can't afford to not join in. As this number continues to grow over time, Facebook provides a promising platform for your marketing efforts. More than half (52 percent) of marketers say Facebook is "the most important social network they use to grow and market their business." LinkedIn came in second place with 21 percent, followed by Twitter, YouTube, and Google+. ([V3B Blog](#))

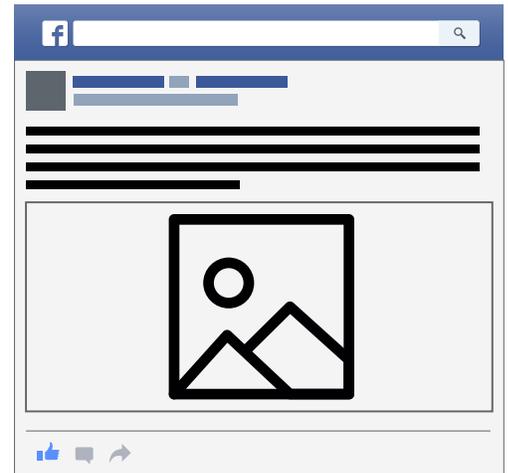
Growth

Publishing Strategy

1. Posts with Images

There's no doubt that we are moving toward a more visual marketing world. Website visitors often prefer consuming visual content to reading blocks of text. People prefer to engage with images and videos more than any other type of post. Facebook's layout and design promote visual content, which sets the stage for a storytelling opportunity. Posting images is a great way to capture your audience's attention, because pictures are much easier to consume than text.

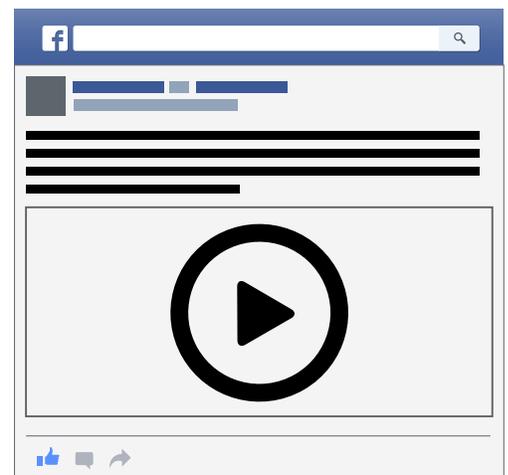
It's important to note that not all images are created equal. You must post high-quality photos that align with your brand and interest your fans. It's also best to include relevant links to your posts with images to direct traffic back to your website.



2. Posts with Video

When it comes to sharing business videos, Facebook has become more popular than YouTube. There are at least [3 billion video views](#) a day—[and the average video post](#) is seen more than twice as often in comparison to any other type of post.

[According to Facebook](#), “[f]or marketers, digital video, particularly on mobile, is becoming more important as well. Combining sight, sound and motion, video creates experiences that are, at their best, memorable, moving and inspiring—the types of experiences that help brand marketers drive important metrics, including awareness, consideration and, ultimately, sales.”



“It’s also best to include relevant links to your posts with images to direct traffic back to your website.”

3. Posts with Questions

Questions help initiate conversation with fans. If you want more interactions on your Facebook posts, questions are the way to go. By asking questions, businesses promote interaction and tell their fans that their opinion really matters. When you request feedback, make sure to respond in a timely manner and let your followers know you're listening. Here are a few examples of questions you can ask in order to increase follower engagement:

Ask for feedback:

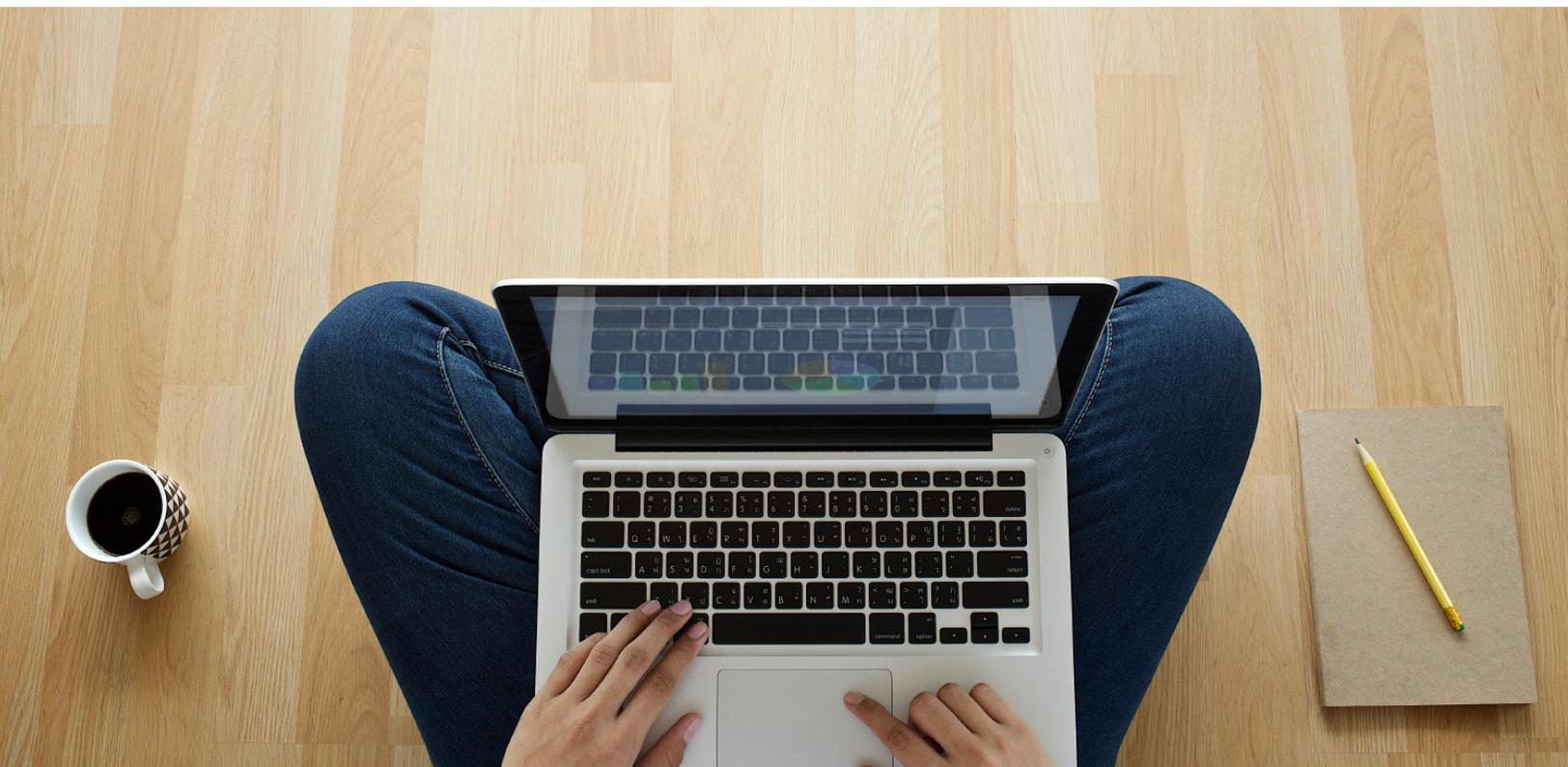
Have you recently launched a new product? Ask your customers what they think. Were they satisfied? Do they have any suggestions for improvement?

Timely questions:

Today marks the beginning of our sale! What will you be purchasing?

Get to know your fans:

What are they looking for? Where are they located?



4. Contests and Offers

These are some of the most engaging Facebook posts. Who doesn't like winning a contest or getting a deal? Not only do these posts create a lot of hype, but they reward your fans and followers while generating excitement. These types of posts will also cause visitors to keep returning to your site in order to check if they have won. Contests and offers are also a great way to capture new fan attention.



5. Calls to Action

The best way to drive your fans to interact with you is to tell them specifically what you would like them to do. Calls to action will help you achieve your desired results more quickly. When creating your call to action, consider what you would like from your fans. Do you want them to share a specific post? To download a new eBook? Make your motive clear and you will be more likely to receive the type of engagement you are looking for.



Paid Opportunities

With more than [1.4 billion people using Facebook](#) and more than 900 million visits every day, Facebook offers up a unique opportunity for marketers to augment their organic efforts. Trouble is, with both an investment of time and money on the line, there's not much room for oversight.

With Facebook Ads, you choose the type of people you want to reach and Facebook delivers your ads to them. This makes your ads more relevant for the people who see them and brings you real results. Facebook offers a wide range of [ad targeting](#) options, including demographic, location, and interests.

Advertising on Facebook is easy for you and your customers. Facebook Ads are highly targeted and actionable. You can measure the results of every ad. Businesses can create ads that direct visitors to download an app, view your videos, add an item to a shopping cart, or take another action from your website. Whether you set a daily limit for one ad or the total amount for a campaign, you're in control.

“It’s also best to include relevant links to your posts with images to direct traffic back to your website.”

For tips on creating Facebook Ads that work, download HubSpot’s free guide, [The Essential Guide to Social Media Advertising](#).

Generating Traffic

As marketers, we're always looking for new ways to increase organic traffic. While search engine optimization is usually the first thing that comes to mind, social media can be equally effective. Sharing blog posts and other content from your website is a great way to bring in new visitors. Your business page should not be used as a sales tactic, but rather a resource and engagement opportunity.

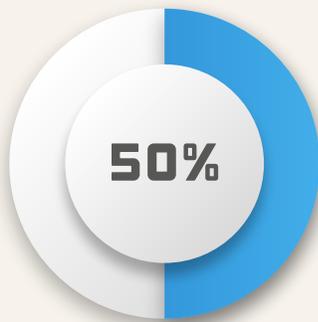
Do's and Don'ts

DOs	DON'Ts
<p>Keep posts short and sweet.</p> <p>Although Facebook doesn't have a character cap like Twitter, don't take this as an open invitation to write your fans a novel. Posts with 100 characters or fewer typically receive more engagement.</p>	<p>Be a salesperson.</p> <p>While it's considered bad practice, you can now also be penalized for it. Facebook made an update to deprioritize promotional posts from Pages. That means if you're only talking about yourself, your fans are less likely to see it.</p>
<p>Ask questions.</p> <p>Find out what your customers think of your new product. Ask for feedback often and listen to what they have to say.</p>	<p>Overpost.</p> <p>Only post when you have something valuable to share and make sure to spread it out.</p>
<p>Answer questions.</p> <p>Be attentive and timely while addressing your fans' comments. This is a great way to build customer loyalty and convert potential customers.</p>	<p>Ignore negative comments.</p> <p>This is a great opportunity to connect with your audience and show off your amazing customer-service skills. Be prompt and transparent. Potential customers will appreciate your authenticity.</p>

Why Twitter?

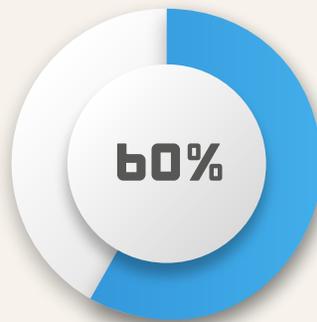
Twitter has become a critical part of marketers' social media strategy. Worldwide, there are about [320 million active monthly users](#)—a number that is too big to ignore. The social platform is best known for its 140-character bite-size updates, transforming the world's access to real-time information. Businesses are taking advantage of Twitter in order to promote their message and engage with their audience.

ENGAGEMENT



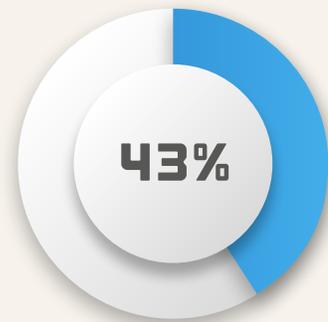
Visited or shopped at the websites of the SMBs they follow

SALES



Purchased from an SMB because of something they saw on Twitter

CUSTOMERS



Plan to purchase regularly from the SMBs they follow

Growth

Publishing Strategy



Tweets that drive engagement

If you want to get followers to Retweet, reply, or like your Tweets:

Get visual and creative.

Followers are more likely to respond to Tweets that are funny, newsworthy and inspiring.

Ask for what you want.

Increase your reach by explicitly asking for Retweets, replies, likes or mentions.

Seize the moment.

Tap into popular conversations around seasonal, cultural and industry-based events.



Tweets that drive direct response

If you want to get followers to take an immediate action:

Start with a compelling offer.

Pique curiosity, drive clicks and generate leads by delivering a relevant and timely offer. Ask followers for suggestions.

Create a sense of urgency.

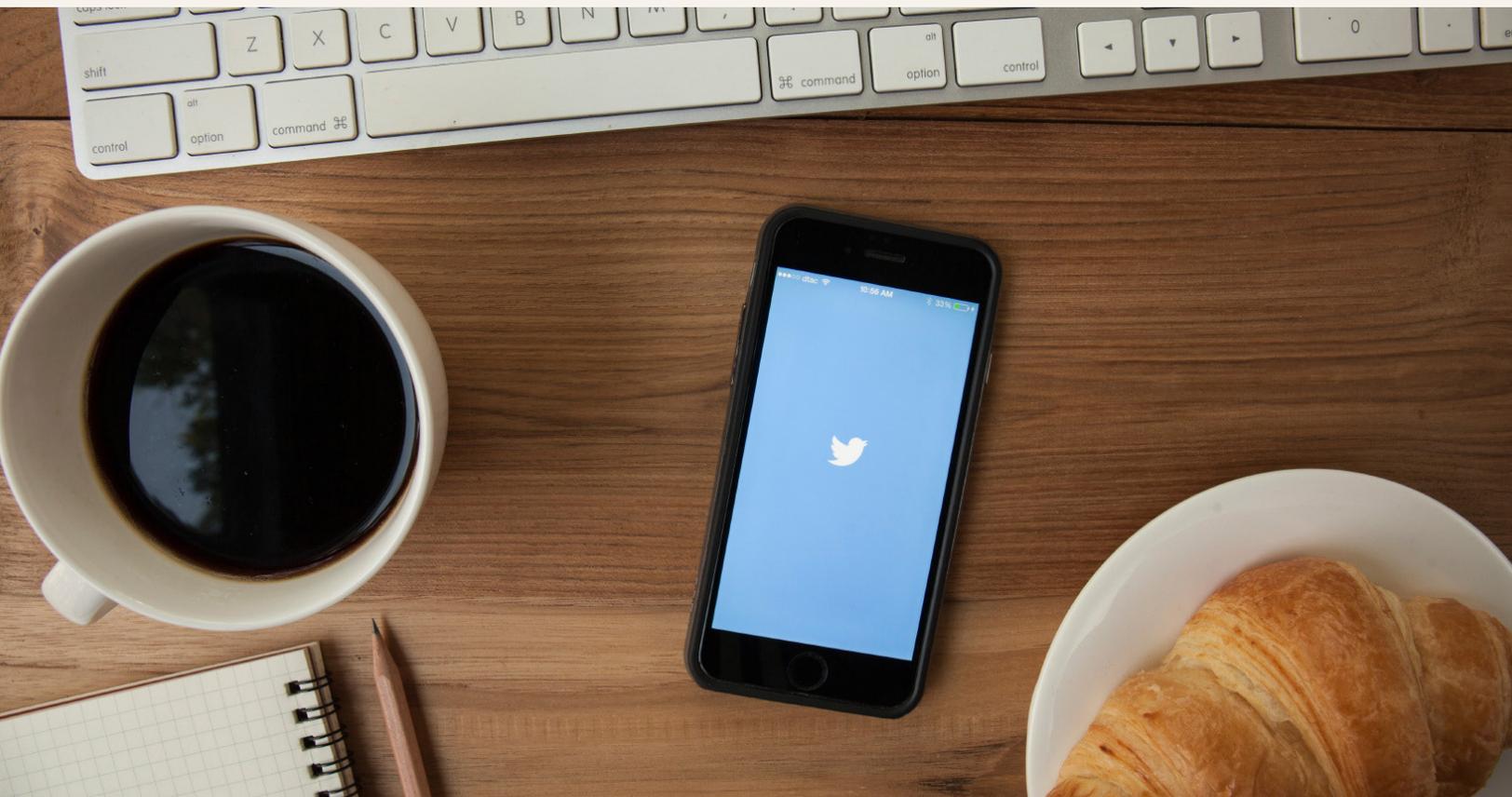
Harness Twitter's real-time nature to inspire action. For instance, limit the availability of your offer to a specific time period, such as 24 hours or a week.

Include a clear call to action.

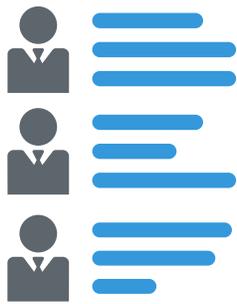
If you want people to click on a URL, don't include hashtags, mentions, or photos that could distract from your link.

Source: <https://business.twitter.com/basics/how-to-create-a-twitter-content-strategy>

“Followers are more likely to respond to Tweets that are funny, newsworthy and inspiring.”

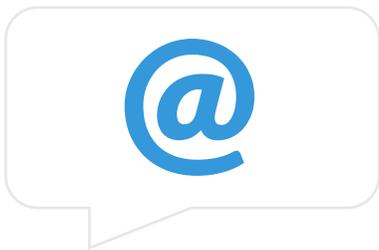


Here are a few more tips to amplify your Twitter strategy:



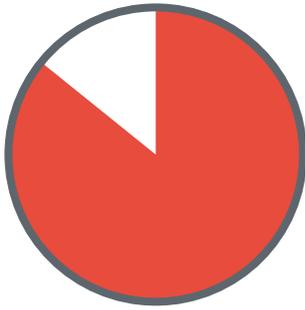
Twitter lists:

Lists are a curated group of Twitter users. Viewing a list timeline will show you a stream of Tweets from only the users on that list. Making lists can help you target your efforts when you're trying to reach a specific group of industry influencers or join in on a conversation related to your niche.



@replies:

When you'd like to tweet at someone directly, begin your message with an @username. Only people who are following both you and @username will see this Tweet. If you'd like more people to see it, just add a period in front of @username.



Use the 80/20 principle:

Twitter advises that 80 percent of your Tweets should focus on driving interactions with your followers, such as Retweets, replies, and likes. Once you've built some rapport, you can mix in direct offers or promotions that get followers to take action, such as clicking on a link or making a purchase from your website.

#Recommended
#Good
#Testimony
#NICE #Recommended
#Good #Best
#Recommended

Hashtags:

Hashtags are one of the most powerful tools for marketers on Twitter. They allow businesses to increase their reach, search for relevant topics, and expose themselves to a wider audience. According to [HubSpot](#), Tweets with hashtags are 20 percent more likely to be retweeted.

Here are a few hashtag best practices:



Make it relevant. The idea behind using a hashtag is to connect your brand, product, or service with others using the same hashtag or searching for it. If no one else is aware or is using the hashtag, it will not have the results you are hoping for.



Join the conversation. Each day, Twitter has a new list of "trending" hashtags. Don't be afraid to join in on the conversation. You can also seek out trending hashtags relevant to your industry as a way to "tag" your content and be more easily found.



#Dont #Spam #With #Hashtags: Less is more. Twitter recommends using no more than two hashtags per Tweet. According to [HubSpot](#), Tweets with one to two hashtags have a 21 percent higher engagement rate than those with three or more.

Tweet Chats

A Tweet chat is a live Twitter event, usually moderated and focused on a specific topic. Users can participate by following a hashtag during a specified time and day. Most often, Tweet chats will happen at the same time weekly or biweekly. Tweet chats are a great opportunity for businesses to connect with other professionals in their industry, gain new followers, and establish themselves as a thought leader by providing insights.

While Tweet chats with a large number of participants can become hard to follow, social media monitoring tools make it easy to keep up with the conversation. Users can create “streams” following a specific hashtag, the moderator’s handle, or any instance your company is mentioned.

[Click here](#) for a list of some great Tweet chats for marketers.

Paid Opportunities

Twitter is where hundreds of millions of people go to discover

what’s happening in the world right now. Twitter Ads are designed to help you connect with this audience and to get results that drive action and add value to your business. You may see different kinds of ads on Twitter, such as [Promoted Tweets](#), [Promoted Accounts](#), and [Promoted Trends](#).

Twitter Ads are highly targeted, making them a great option for nearly all types of businesses. Twitter Ads allow you to build Tailored Audiences and seek out exactly whom you are looking for. This means that businesses can recapture lost sales, find qualified leads, improve newsletter open rates, and more. By importing lists of existing contacts, you can follow up with audiences that have already interacted with your business. By using this functionality, businesses can ensure they are providing marketing qualified leads with the “right” content.

[Check out Twitter’s business page](#) in order to learn more about its advertising solutions.

Do's and Don'ts

DOs

Tweet often.

Keep your account up to date and the conversation flowing. Users are much more likely to follow and engage with highly active accounts. A good rule of thumb is tweeting three to five times per day. You can adjust your frequency depending upon your audience over time.

Keep it short and sweet.

Twitter allows 140 characters per Tweet; however, studies show that Tweets under this cap receive more interactions. Also, staying under 140 characters allows users to add their own comments and engage with your content.

Engage with followers.

Twitter is a great social media platform for connecting with users interested in your niche, customers, industry professionals, and more. It's important to build a strong Twitter community—connect with your followers, retweet them, ask questions, and reply to their comments.

DON'Ts

Spam.

While it's important to be active, make sure your Tweets are providing value. Spread your Tweets out through the day, tweeting at times your followers are most active.

Be a robot.

While creating an auto-publishing schedule can save you time and resources, make sure your feed also includes personalized Tweets. Also, with the quick pace of Twitter, it's essential to keep up with the conversation.

Shout.

Using all caps or too many exclamation points can be read as yelling. Excitement is one thing, but there are often better ways to express it. Use these tools sparingly.



Why LinkedIn?

With more than 380 million members, LinkedIn is the most popular social network for professionals and one of the top social networks overall. It's hard not to have LinkedIn on your marketing radar. However, with new social networks sprouting up constantly, LinkedIn is a platform that many marketers overlook or may put on the backburner. But the truth is, LinkedIn can be extremely powerful—especially for businesses looking to extend their network and grow their reach. So the question is: Have you created a presence for your company on LinkedIn yet?

Growth

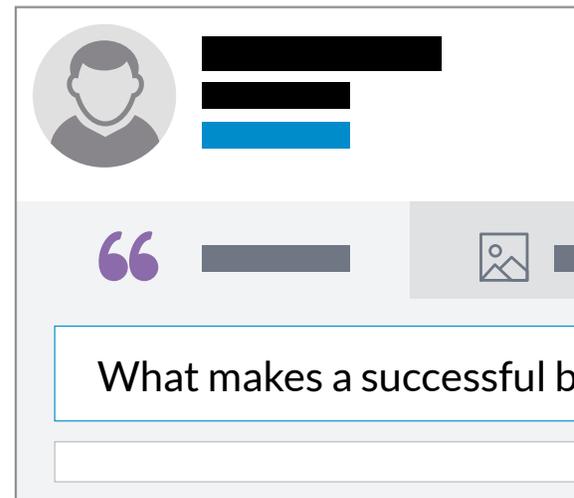
Publishing Tips

Much like Facebook, LinkedIn allows its users to publish updates to their network. As you may expect, all things related to business, careers, and entrepreneurship can find a place on LinkedIn. Your status appears on your profile and in the LinkedIn Network Updates email to your connections. This gives other professionals an opportunity to notice what you are working on and decide to connect or click through on links in your status.

Here are a few tips on how to optimize your LinkedIn posts:

Headline and Image

Your status headline and image are critical to your posts' success. Both on the sidebar and in content navigation pages, the only preview available for any article is the title and the image. It's important that you select both carefully and make sure they play into the theme of the article. As LinkedIn is a professional network, "clickbait" doesn't work well. Instead, try creating headlines that encourage engagement and increase curiosity.



Call to Action

Typically, the main goal of content syndication on social media is the spread of your ideas and the building of more awareness, links, and, of course, traffic. Once you've added your headline, your image, and a brief explanation of your offer, you're ready to add the call to action. Your call to action should be clear and concise and should present value to the reader.



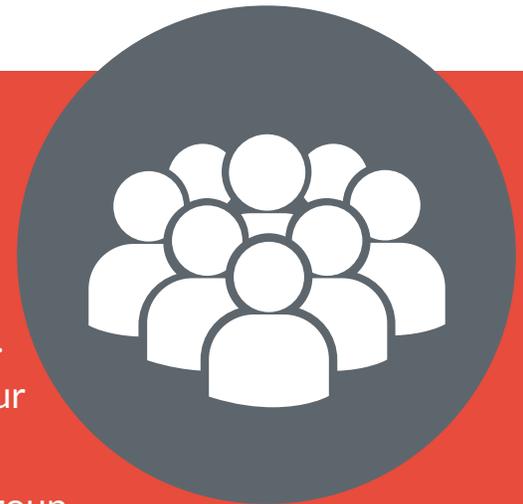
“Once you’ve added your headline, your image, and a brief explanation of your offer, you’re ready to add the call to action.”

LinkedIn Pulse

LinkedIn Pulse is the professional self-publishing platform for anyone from any industry. The platform gives publishers a wide audience and allows for specialized targeting. How and when you use LinkedIn Pulse will depend on your business goals; however, it is considered to be a mix between a blog and social network. LinkedIn Pulse provides a unique opportunity for businesses to have their name and content seen by other professionals in their niche. LinkedIn Pulse serves up news based on your industry, your connections, and any other signals, such as what you choose to follow on the social network. The platform is one of the best tools that businesses can use in order to make sure their content is seen by the right people.

LinkedIn Groups

Groups can give you access to people and discussions related to an industry, topic, or even geographic region. Creating and managing your own LinkedIn Group for your brand or industry is a great way to build a network and generate leads. Not only should you create your own group, but you should also consider joining relevant groups and participating in discussions. Both of these tactics will help establish you as a thought leader in your industry, build up your network, and allow your content to be seen by more of the “right” audience. By engaging in discussion with group members, you are able to show that you are a valuable resource.



Network-Building

When you connect and engage with the right people, endless professional opportunities will unfold. Network-building should be an ongoing process, as new professionals are joining LinkedIn every day.

Here are a few ways to create a network:



Email Contacts:

If you're just getting started on LinkedIn, begin by uploading your email contacts to your network. This is a great way to utilize your current business connections in order to create an expanded, highly relevant network.



Invitations:

As your network expands, it's likely you'll begin to receive a flood of new invitations daily. Be picky. You are in full control of your network; consider quality versus quantity.



LinkedIn Groups:

Again, LinkedIn Groups are a great source for making new connections. By actively participating in high-quality groups, you are given an opportunity to "meet" other professionals who share your interests.



Advanced Search:

The Advanced Search tool includes a wide variety of filters to search by. These include job title, location, company, and school. For example, businesses can conduct a search with the keyword "content strategist" and then add "within 20 miles of my ZIP code." You can keep building on this search in order to further narrow your results. This is a great tool to help you find new connections that are a logical fit for your network.

Paid Opportunities

The general principle behind LinkedIn PPC ads works much the same as Google PPC ads. You target a demographic and location and then set a budget for individual clicks and total expenditure. Your ad then competes on LinkedIn pages with like-minded advertisers. LinkedIn also offers a program where you pay for ad impressions—how many people are exposed to your ad.

Here are a few benefits of the PPC ad program at LinkedIn:



It's relatively new

This means that there are fewer advertisers competing for exposure and your ads have a better chance of being seen.



Target professionals

Because LinkedIn is the professional's network, its ad program allows you to target specific job titles, industries, company sizes, and more. This means that businesses are able to increase their chances of providing the "right" audience with the information they're looking for.



Variety

Along with its highly customizable targeting tactics, LinkedIn's ad program also offers a wide variety of types of ads. These types include poll ads, video ads, and group ads. Businesses can be sure they are providing the right eyes through the right medium.

Do's and Don'ts

DOs

Answer questions on LinkedIn.

Ask and respond to relevant questions in the LinkedIn “Answers” section. Anytime you ask or answer a question, it will show up in the Network Updates feed viewed by your connections. Businesses can answer questions in order to increase engagement, gain exposure points, and become a trusted expert. When answering a question, be sure to include relevant links to resources on your website.

Personalize connection requests.

Never send out a connection request with the generic default message. People will often hit the “Report as Spam” or “I don’t know” button—a sure way to quickly have your account flagged.

Nurture your connections.

Make an effort to reach out to your valued connections. It can be as easy as commenting on their recent update or offering a “congrats” on a business accomplishment.

DON'Ts

Spam.

Posting too often or ignoring best practices is a quick way to lose connections or be banned from a group. Keep in mind that LinkedIn is a network of professionals—everything you publish is directly tied back to your reputation.

Post self-serving content.

Make sure your content is providing value to your network. LinkedIn is not the place to ask for new business. Save the contests and offers for more appropriate platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

Send out generic messages.

If you are planning to send one message to multiple users, make sure you unselect the option “Allow recipients to see each other’s names and email addresses.” Nobody likes robotic messages in their inbox.



Why Google+?

While Google+ is often overlooked by businesses, it is a big contender in the social media mix. According to Vic Gundotra, former Senior Vice President, Social at Google, Google+ had 300 million monthly active users as of December 2015, up from 190 million in May. Believe it or not, Google+ is currently the second-largest social network in the world. It is certainly not a social network you can ignore.

If you have already created a Google+ account, you may still be wondering why it's worth your company's time and resources. If you have a small to medium-sized business, there are a few reasons it's beneficial to be active on this network.

Here are a few big reasons your business should be using Google+:

Increase your search ranking:

This is probably the biggest one. Who isn't looking to increase their ranking? Google+ loves it when you use its services, including its social network—and it rewards you for it. While many marketers discredit the “influence” of Google+, the simple fact is that [studies of SERP ranking factors](#) continue to highlight the influence that Google My Business signals (and therefore Google+) have on your company's organic rankings.



It has connections:

Google+ is connected to many other resources that you may not even know it's associated with. These include Hangouts, Communities, YouTube, Google Search, Gmail, and Google Maps. Each of these are created in order to benefit your marketing strategy and add more visibility to your brand.

Local SEO:

You may have started noticing that Google has started displaying a list of local search results, the “local search carousel,” each time you do a search for a product or service. For local results, Google considers its own factors, and the number of +1s on the Google+ Business Page seems to be the most influential in determining ranking order. Businesses should encourage clients to leave reviews on your Google Business page. Reviews will increase your business's Google authority and increase the chances of you ranking well in the local search carousel.

Growth

Publishing

While most of the publishing best practices for Google+ are mostly the same as similar networks such as Facebook, there are a few things you should know that make it stand apart:



Images

Google+ is a highly visual network. It allows you to share images of varying sizes, styles, and formats. Instead of using the thumbnail images that auto-generate when you drop a link into your status update, **upload a standard-size image** in order to grab your reader's attention.



Hashtags

Similar to Twitter, you can include hashtags in your posts in order to make them more discoverable. This will help you build up your network and allow others to join in on the conversation.



Visibility

Google+ allows you to set your post as “public” or as “private.” Public posts are visible to anyone visiting your page, while the “private” setting allows you to publish your post to a specific circle or email address.

Google+ is a highly visual network. It allows you to share images of varying sizes, styles, and formats.



Networking

Join a community

Google+ Communities are Google's version of a group or forum. Communities bring users together around a particular topic. Users can take advantage of communities by asking questions, engaging in discussions, or by sharing content with users who are also interested in a community's topic. Joining communities is a great way for businesses to grow their reach to the "right" audience and connect with other industry professionals.

Google Circles

Google Circles is a way for you to group people together based on the relationship you have with them. It may initially take you some time to define your circles; however, in time, you will find it's a great way to figure out to whom you send what content. It can also help businesses decide what they would like to see in their stream as well.

Paid Opportunities

+Post Ads

With Google +Post ads, you pay to promote your valuable Google+ content as an ad on relevant third-party websites. You can promote any of your public content—pictures, videos, updates, hangouts, and more.

Google +Post ads work a bit differently from most social ads, as they don't show up in a user's stream. Instead, they're served through Google's Display Network and can be managed through your AdWords account. [Google's Display Network](#) is a paid service that displays your ads on relevant websites and to the audience that will most likely be interested in your product or service.

Currently, Google +Post ads require businesses to have at least 1,000 followers. However, the great thing about +Post ads is that users who are logged into Google can easily reshare, +1, or comment on your ad, without being redirected to Google+, creating a seamless interaction for the user.



Do's and Don'ts

DOs

Add the “+1” button to your site.

The Google+ “+1” button is very similar to Facebook’s “Like” button but with added power. If a page receives enough +1s, it will rank higher in Google’s algorithm, thereby improving your SEO. When a user +1s your page, his or her contacts also become exposed to your content.

Claim your business page.

Apart from creating a Google+ page, businesses must still claim or create a business page. The easiest way is to Google the name of the business and see if there is a page already there; if not, go to www.google.com/business in order to set one up.

Use Google Circles in order to segment your content.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, Google+ allows users to segment their content by promoting it to different circles. This feature allows businesses to promote the “right” kind of content to each of their differing audiences.

DON'Ts

Keyword-stuff your profile.

Keyword-stuffing is an old marketing trick that is no longer tolerated. Google reads pages with excessive keywords the same way users do. It’s spam.

Run contests directly through Google+.

Unlike Facebook, Google+ does not allow you to run contests or promotions directly through its site. By doing so, businesses risk violating the terms of usage and risk having their company page being removed.

Leave your profile incomplete.

Under the “Profile” tab, businesses have the opportunity to tell their story not only to potential customers, but to search engines as well. Not only does a complete profile give visitors the information they’re looking for, but it also gives Google information to “grade” you on.

Social Media Metrics and Reporting

Analyzing your efforts is important. How do you know what's working if you're not reading the numbers? Social media expert Dan Zarrella said it best: "Marketing without data is like driving with your eyes closed." By performing a few small tests, your company can nail down best practices and utilize those results for a long time if completed properly.

Here are a few areas of your social media efforts you should be testing:

Measure Days and Times

As you can probably guess, there is no magic formula for determining the best time and day to schedule your social posts. However, marketers can use data in order to find out when their audience is "hanging out" online. The key is to find the right balance for you, your audience, and your content. Start out by posting at various times throughout the day and week in order to find out when you're receiving the most interactions and engagement. Over time, you will begin seeing patterns to help you define your optimal posting schedule. Keep in mind that these days and times may continue changing—**so keep on testing!**

Measure Platforms

Earlier in this guide, we discussed the different social networks that your business should be actively using. While it's important to be active across the board, it's important to know which platforms are performing best for your bottom-line business goals. Where are your visits from social media coming from? Is your audience more active on Facebook or Twitter? These are all important things to note as you are putting together your social strategy.

Measure Channels

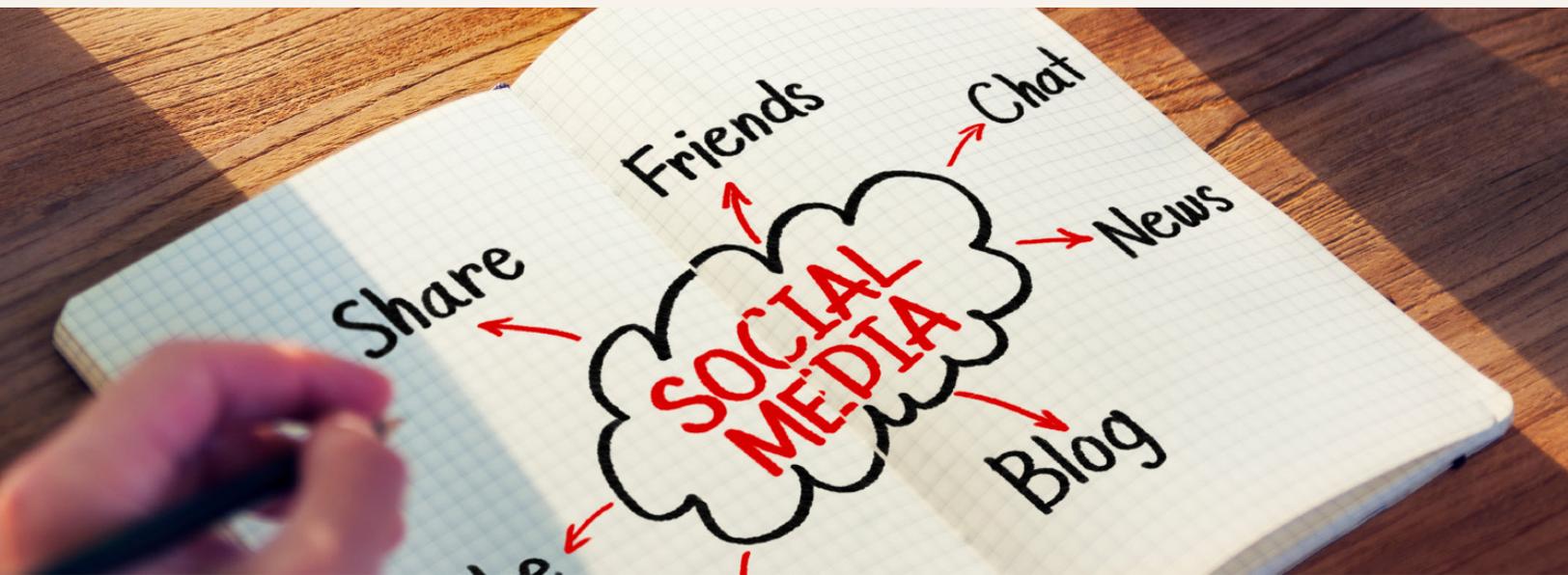
Analyzing your channels is one step deeper into your platform reporting. For example, instead of simply measuring your overall LinkedIn efforts, you can measure specific groups you've been participating in. Measuring your various channels will help you ensure your efforts are being targeted in the right areas. Marketers can dig deep into their individual accounts in order to find out where their efforts are most well-received.

Measure Reach

Measuring the overall reach of your social media accounts gives businesses a top-level snapshot across social platforms in order to help you determine your important bottom-line business metrics. Your business's social reach includes metrics such as visits, contacts, and customers generated by social media each month. This type of report provides a great overview of insights that can easily be shared and digested across a team.

Measure Content

As any marketer will tell you, planning out your content strategy is one of the most important aspects of your marketing plan. So what types of content should you be posting on social media? How will you convey your brand voice through your messaging? The content that you post to each of these social networks depends heavily on your audience. Do they more easily digest blog posts or infographics? Are your posts with images receiving more interactions than those without? These are all questions to ask when determining what types of content work best for your social media marketing strategy.



How HubSpot Makes Social Media Marketing Easy

There are many marketing tools that can help make social media marketing easy, but the most helpful is HubSpot. The software is rated No. 1 in customer satisfaction, and the tools are unmatched by competitors.

Here are just a few of the benefits that HubSpot offers:



Schedule posts in advance for all your accounts or bulk-upload Tweets via an Excel or CSV file.



Create keyword-monitoring streams of your most important contacts. Trigger email alerts when a contact mentions you or a keyword.



Stop drinking from a firehose. Through color-coding and prioritized streams of your customers and contacts, HubSpot shows you which Twitter mentions are most important to your business.



Don't waste time on what doesn't work. The Social Reports tool breaks down your social media strategy with analytics on your published messages and their impact on your bottom-line business goals.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Lexie is an Associate Consultant at SmartBug Media. With her digital marketing and account management experience, Lexie helps clients implement their inbound marketing strategies in order to grow leads, conversions, and revenue.

ABOUT SMARTBUG MEDIA

SmartBug Media is one of a handful of HubSpot Diamond partners in the world and is the highest-rated agency in the history of the HubSpot ecosystem. We also boast the highest ROI documented from any HubSpot partner: 3,558 percent and 14,500 percent ROI on a six-month and three-year campaign, respectively.

For more than seven years, SmartBug Media has been helping businesses increase sales leads, close more customers, and enhance the reach of their brands. From building comprehensive online marketing programs to designing new websites to driving leads through social media or sales enablement, we're an extension of your marketing team that delivers.

For a free inbound marketing or web design consultation, or to learn more, visit <http://www.smartbugmedia.com/> or call [949-236-6448](tel:949-236-6448).

