



YOUR GUIDE TO...

SOCIAL MEDIA
MARKETING

INTRODUCTION

Social media marketing (SMM) is the process of gaining webtraffic, brand awareness and engagement through social media platforms. SMM programmes usually centre on efforts to create engaging content that attracts attention and encourages readers to share it across their own social networks, which helps further promote your business.

SMM is an additional channel to use to gain attention for your business.

The primary values of social media for business are:

- **Connect:** enable members to link up and communicate with each other directly
- **Collaborate:** enable members to generate knowledge or best practice information through open interaction with their connections and the community
- **Share:** enable members to distribute information or knowledge

Consumers are increasingly ignoring ads and are instead interacting with their peers and trusted figures within their social networks to obtain and share authentic opinions on products, services and brands. In this guide, we highlight the key social media networks, the principles of successful social media marketing, including what to do and what not to do, and tips for growing your social media network.

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THE KEY SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS



Twitter

- Over 500 million accounts
- 175 million tweets a day
- 1 million accounts are added to Twitter every day
- 72% of Twitter users publish blog posts at least monthly
- 48% of Twitter users share deals and coupons



LinkedIn

- Has over 300 million members in over 200 countries
- 2 new members join every second
- 36th most visited website in the world
- Executives from all Fortune 500 companies are LinkedIn members



Facebook

- Monthly active users now totals nearly 1 billion
- 250 million photos are uploaded every day
- 20% of all page views on the web are on Facebook
- 425 million mobile users
- 2.7 billion 'likes' per day
- 57% of users are female

DOS AND DON'TS

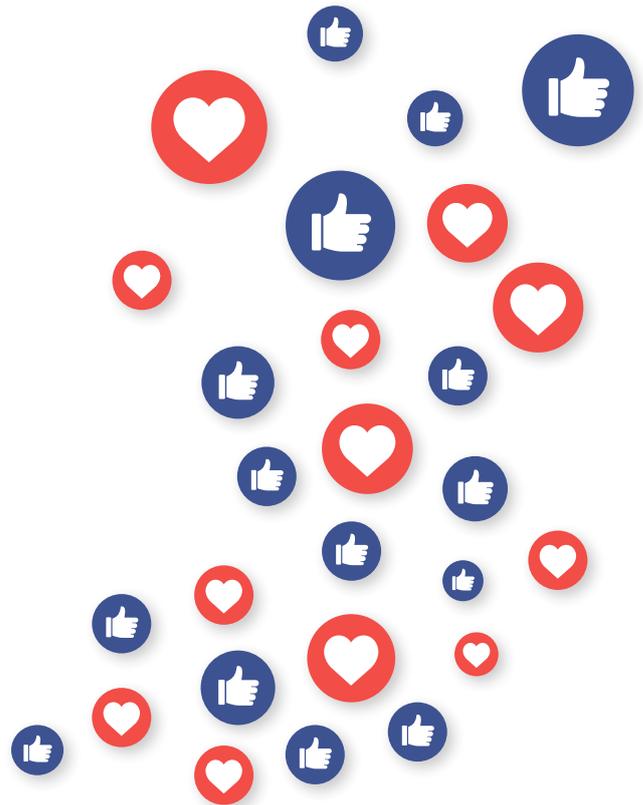
What gets engagement?

A great social media presence is now essential to businesses both large and small. Potential customers and consumers are looking for social media accounts that are:

- Smart and funny
- Good conversationalists which listen to their needs
- Going to bring value to their lives in some way

Common mistakes and solutions to avoid them

- **Not committing to social media long term:** too many businesses get excited about their new Facebook page, but two months later they have already forgotten to update it. You should embrace social media as part of your every day business; don't try to accomplish everything at once but take it one step at a time.
- **Not updating your page on a regular basis:** many businesses assume that once you have a cover photo, profile image and your about section is all filled out that you don't need to touch your profile ever again. You should update your page regularly, changing your cover photo and profile image every few months and engaging your users daily. Once your page is dead, it's much more difficult to get it back up and visible again.
- **Too much automation:** some businesses have blog posts automatically uploaded to their social media platforms but this can cause issues, such as posting multiple updates in a short space of time or the wrong kind of post going to the wrong platform. You should post to each social media site differently as the language, context and culture on each is different. You shouldn't automate posts but you can still schedule them, as long as you are in control of when and where they are going.
- **Post overload:** spread out your posts and plan them accurately, posting too often can annoy people and cause them to unfollow you.
- **Post ghost town:** if you visit a page and they haven't posted in over two months it can make a visitor think that the page owner isn't serious about their business or is perhaps out of business. To resolve this, you should have a content strategy and post at least once a day.



WHO'S DOING IT WELL?



General Electric

GE's social media is a good example of how a brand turns its own work into genuinely inspiring and engaging content around science and engineering. GE publishes a lot of research, as well as educational content, and it does well to translate this to social media at the right level for everyone to understand.



Pret A Manger

The clarity of Pret A Manger's brand - natural food, organic coffee - is carried nicely onto social media. There are no bells and whistles, no quirky tone of voice or jokes, Pret just focuses on its products. Its fruit smoothie promotion resulted in 10,000 smoothies being claimed in store, showing that social channels can be a perfect way to drive footfall.



BT

Using social media, companies can deflect costly calls and update customers, pointing them to the right areas of their website or to livechat. For example, in 2014, BT's social media customer service deflected 600,000 contacts a year from the phones, resulting in a £2 million annual saving.



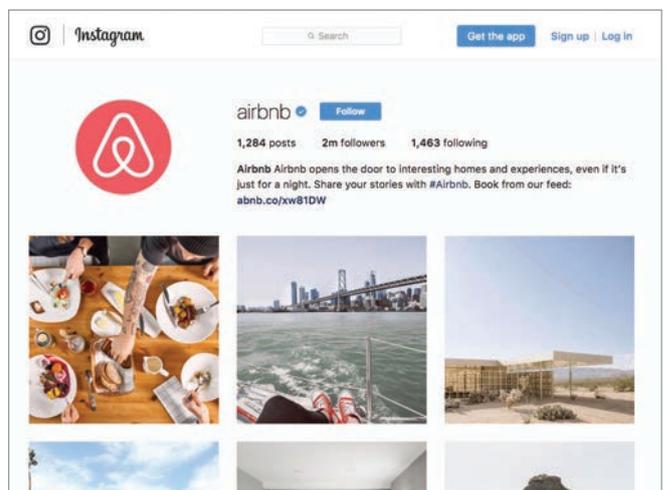
Airbnb

Aside from food, travel is pretty much the chief use of Instagram, so this is a natural channel for Airbnb. With so many hosts to choose from and the brand's focus on living somewhere rather than visiting, its feed has an authentic quality that a hotel chain cannot match.



Cancer Research UK

The team at Cancer Research UK use social media to answer a variety of questions about their work and about cancer in general. A lot of this social activity works in tandem with the charity's content strategy, allowing people to be directed to authoritative content or to a blog platform that the team updates.



THE LATEST SOCIAL MEDIA TRENDS

1. Live Video Streaming

Live video took off in 2016, but it looks like it's going to be a key trend in 2017 too. There are already social media platforms taking advantage of this phenomenon - Facebook Live, YouTube Live and Periscope Pro, to name a few, with Instagram recently releasing live video and Facebook launching its 360-degree video for Facebook Live users for all pages and profiles.

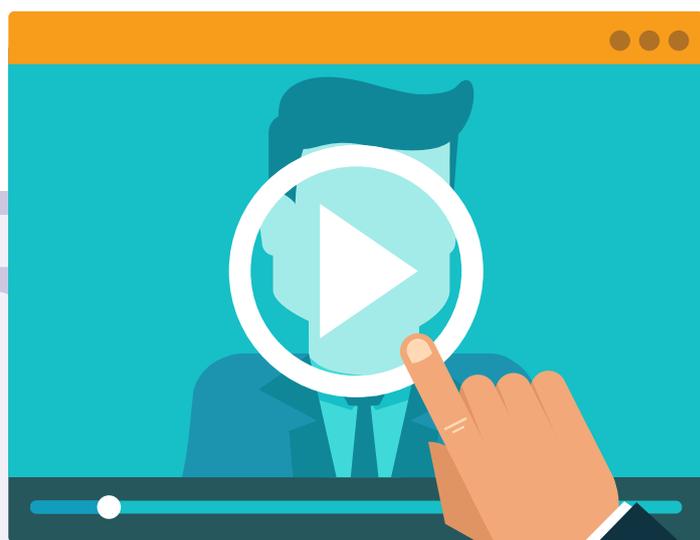
Live video is a great feature for businesses to capitalise on. It's a great way to raise awareness of your brand and build a community of followers. Also, as the content you post is authentic and in real time, businesses are able to humanise themselves and connect with their customers in way that edited video advertising cannot.

A great example of live streaming is NASA's live stream which lets you watch Earth from the International Space Station 24/7. And believe it or not, an average of 3,000 people around the world watch it at any given time.

2. Expiring Content

Allowing content to expire produces a sense of urgency, even though it may seem contrary to common marketing sense. Snapchat was able to burst onto the scene with that very unique concept, and has been successful enough to turn down Facebook's \$3 billion buyout offer. Since then, other platforms have taken note—most recently Instagram, with its Instagram Stories feature.

By encouraging users to act quickly in order to capitalise on offers, brands can potentially take advantage of this trend in new and unexpected ways. We advise that you invest time and money into discovering which type of expiring content works best to motivate your audience and keep them engaged with your products or services.



3. The Rise of Chatbots

The introduction of Chatbots to websites and social media platforms has significantly increased over the past year, and as ecommerce consumers become more comfortable interacting with machines online, Chatbots will inevitably continue to dominate the online landscape.

Chatbots utilise artificial intelligence to mimic conversation, and are built with language assistance capacity, giving them advanced ability to understand and interpret what a user is saying. Chatbots are also constantly evolving - they're now able to reply to users not just in text, but also through the use of videos and even GIFs.

More and more people are spending more time in social media messaging apps, and as such Chatbots are becoming a more popular option for businesses. Chatbots can respond immediately to customer's queries, anytime, day or night, which can dramatically improve the user experience and the customer's perception of the brand.



4. Social Ecommerce

With around 93% of Millennials spending regular time on social networks, ecommerce is now spreading directly onto social media channels. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest are already enabling users to purchase products directly through their mobile apps.

The Sprout Social Index discovered 57% of consumers are more likely to buy from a brand they follow. Additionally, 75% have made a purchase because they saw it on social media. The power of social media can truly impact a buyer's impression and in 2017 more brands are moving toward social commerce. Brands are now focusing on buyer's emotions for purchases, and using social media to subtly sell their products and services.

5. Paid Advertising

It's becoming increasingly hard to achieve results from purely organic social advertising. Most social media platforms have changed their algorithms to remove chronological timeline updates - making your business almost invisible unless you implement their paid ads. This means if you want your business page to be seen, you will have to revert to paid social media advertising.

And as more businesses start using paid advertising, the prices start slowly rising. Whether you want to boost your posts, reach more people, promote your page or promote your website, Facebook advertising in particular offers a range of different options. However, we can't stress how important it is to nail your social advertising strategy, otherwise you are simply throwing money down the drain.

TIPS FOR BUILDING AND GROWING QUALITY SOCIAL NETWORKS

- **Engage with your email subscribers**

You probably don't want to email your list every day, but you'll likely want to stay top of mind and connect with them on a daily basis somehow. Social media is the perfect solution!

- **Combine your marketing channels**

Your social media marketing, SEO, content marketing, blogging, advertising and email marketing should all be linked.

- **Identify your outcomes**

The five main approaches are:

- Brand maintenance
- Community-building
- Influencer outreach
- Reputation management and development
- The big splash - these are the big creative campaigns that garner a lot of short-term attention

- **Become the Wikipedia of your industry**

If a consumer has ever asked a question, you should be answering it.

- **Ask your audience questions**

When it comes to social media, you want to engage and get people involved. By asking your audience a question, you give them permission to speak. You'll learn a lot about your business and you can build a deeper relationship with your audience.

- **Never stop listening**

You have to have a conversation in which you're engaging your customers. Take relevant Twitter search terms, e.g. "need an accountant" and "we're hiring", then take what you learn from listening and use it to build better products, services and marketing campaigns.

- **Develop a content marketing mission statement**

If you can get your mission statement right, you'll make SMM that much easier for yourself. An effective content marketing mission statement should include the core target audience, what will be delivered to that audience and the intended outcome for the audience.

- **Create a systematic approach**

Consistency builds trust and efficiency lowers your marketing costs. By simply staying front of mind with your community, you will reinforce your messaging and create loyalty. Members of your network will be able to count on you to show up week after week with valuable insights, information and guidance.

- **Create your voice**

A blog is the perfect place to establish your 'voice' and serves as a vehicle to help both seed conversations in social media and help lead those same social media users back to your website. Simply being active in social media helps increase brand awareness, but when a user comes back to your website it gives you a higher probability of converting them into a customer.

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www.fig.agency

t: 01457 857111 e: contact@fig.agency 172 - 174 High Street West, Glossop, Derbyshire. SK13 8ER