



INNOVATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP



Social Media Marketing



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This factsheet looks at the benefit of using social media platforms as a marketing tool. It summarises several of the most popular social media sites that are used by businesses and sets out the Key steps for running your own social media marketing campaign .

Social media has now become an important part of everyday life. Not only do people use it to connect with friends and family, but it's also a way of interacting with brands and businesses. This means there are opportunities for businesses of all sizes to use social media as part of their marketing strategy.

Social media marketing uses social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to interact and connect with customers and communities. This can be done through images, text, videos, or a combination of all three, and can also be done either organically or through paid-for campaigns. Social media marketing can take different forms, depending on the platform and medium used. Although content is often at the core of social media marketing, its scope also extends to analysis, engagement, and advertising.

Social Media can be used for a variety of marketing purposes including;

- Raise brand awareness
- Connect with target audience
- Direct selling
- Gain traffic (i.e. visits to your site or social pages)
- Create new leads
- Provide customer support

By utilising social media as a key marketing tool for your business it can also offer some key benefits. This includes;

• **Anytime availability**

If you're running a small business, it's unlikely you'll be following a standard 9-5 work pattern – especially in the early days. Whether you need to answer a customer query at the weekend, or launch a new product or service in the evening, social media lets you connect with your community immediately, at a time that suits everyone.

• **Low-cost service**

If you opt to run your social media marketing activity yourself, then joining and sharing on the platforms is essentially free. While you may consider paid content eventually, in the beginning, the free tools available are likely to be sufficient. Don't forget that although you might not have to pay for the service, it can take up a considerable chunk of your time.





• Improve organic search results

One of the factors that search engines like when ranking sites is social media activity. As a result, sharing and tweeting can help you boost your business by moving your website higher up the rankings, helping more people to find you.

• Community engagement

By using social media, you can market directly to your customers on the platforms and channels that they are already using. Not only does this open up more opportunities for potential sales, but it also allows you to engage with your customers, too. As a small business, this lets your customers interact with you or your team on a more personal level.

• Business networking

Social media marketing can also be beneficial for linking you with other start-ups in your sector.

TYPES OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Facebook

Founded in 2004, Facebook has grown to become one of the internet's most enduringly popular social media platforms. Facebook allows you to create a specific Facebook for Business profile, which you can use to interact with your customers. It will offer your business the opportunity to post and share text, image and video content. Features like the instant messaging function (for customer support) and the ability to create ads (for promoting products) are particularly useful for businesses. Small businesses that receive a lot of incoming queries which need to be responded to quickly could find Facebook an ideal platform to use, while the advertising features are ideal for targeting ads at specific user groups.

Twitter

With more than 500 million tweets sent each day, Twitter is an ideal platform for businesses looking to connect with more people. Twitter allows businesses to promote Tweets and run ads, allowing you to boost the reach of your 280-character messages. Twitter is primarily word-based, with its #hashtags and direct messages – essentially, it's all about building a conversation with your customers. Twitter could be ideal for small businesses with lots of articles and written content to share. As it's word-based, it's also ideal for managing customer service enquiries.





The largest proportion of Instagram users globally are in the 18-24- and 25-34-years old age brackets, suggesting the platform is particularly suitable for businesses wanting to target a younger demographic.

Pinterest

Pinterest is another highly visual platform. It allows its users to create and curate boards of their favourite inspirational images. If your business offers luxury holidays or budget interiors, Pinterest offers the opportunity for businesses to get their products in front of customers who are looking to make decisions. Your business can also share content that it itself finds inspirational. Promoted pins and buyable pins are a way of targeting more customers as well, with the latter allowing users to make purchases directly within Pinterest – a quick and easy experience for them, and a prime commercial opportunity for businesses.

With the opportunity to buy and sell within the platform, Pinterest could be a cost-effective starting point for an ecommerce business.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is often referred to as the social media site for professional profiles, however, it's also a place to promote your business through its Company pages, while its dedicated service for small businesses, Open for Business, allows users to find your business services. LinkedIn can be used to share content, find talent, and build a community. You can post articles and contribute to groups, as well as advertise job opportunities and connect team members.

YouTube

You Tube allows businesses to create their own content or run an advert and is the place to be for businesses wanting to use video marketing. It allows users to create video content that can be accessed by a worldwide audience. YouTube can be used to create informative how-to videos, or videos that raise brand awareness by taking a look 'behind-the-scenes' of your start-up on a day-to-day basis- e.g. the platform would be ideal for showcasing what happens during your production processes, while YouTube's live function allows for 'in-the-moment' connection.

Video content is becoming an increasingly popular form of marketing, and YouTube is one of the most well-known social media platforms dedicated to the moving image.





Google Maps.

Google Maps is becoming an invaluable tool for marketing — and, increasingly, a better tool than social networks. It reaches a huge number of customers — more than is possible with the social networks. Google Maps has more than a billion users. Whenever consumers want to find a storefront business, they increasingly do so using Google Search or Google Maps. Maps content is now automatically appearing in search engine results, so a strong showing on Google Maps gives you both Maps and Search. And Maps results are favoured in results when the user is physically near. There is a new feature that enables the public to message businesses directly through the Maps app. Customers can use the messaging feature to order products, ask questions about whether something is in stock or ask other customer service-related questions. Google Maps also offers opportunities no other social network does. For example, businesses can have the interior of their locations featured via the StreetView “Indoor Maps” program. This feature will become increasingly valuable as StreetView becomes a virtual reality experience.

Key steps for running you're a social media marketing campaign

• Set goals

Before you get started on your campaign, it's important to think about why you're running it. Some common reasons for marketing on social media include to improve search result rankings, increase engagement, or raise brand awareness. A campaign may also be driven by a seasonal event, like Christmas or Halloween. Similarly, you'll need to consider the channels that the campaign will focus on, such as Twitter, LinkedIn, or Facebook — these platforms all have different uses and purposes, and in turn attract a different type of audience.

• Identify your audience

Who is your audience? If you're already established, it might be existing customers or users. And if you do have an audience already, you can analyse trends to highlight areas that you want to work on. Alternatively, if you're yet to launch — or want to attract a new audience — you can create personas of a typical user to help you refine your campaign. Once you know who you want to target, step into their shoes, and think about what they would type into search engines to find your business. This is called keyword research, and it'll help you to identify the best search terms to target and include in your campaign.





• Confirm the budget

How much money you'll need to allocate for your campaign will depend on a number of factors. If you're focused on organic social media, then this is essentially free. However, be sure to take into account the time you'll need to spend on a campaign, as well as any tools or software you may need. If you want to include paid content in your campaign, then you'll need to budget for the cost of running ads, too. If you choose to hire a professional photographer or copywriter for certain aspects, then consider the costs of these as well.

• Consider content requirements

Content is one of the most important elements of a social media campaign. Therefore, think about the content that you intend to use, and how will it be created. You could make it yourself, opt to hire a professional content creator, or select stand-out user generated content if your business already has a social following.

• Interacting with your community

There are many tools that you can use to help you run a campaign, such as social media scheduling platforms like Hootsuite, or a CRM system like Salesforce.

• Measure success

Both during and after a campaign, you should use analytics and other tools to help you understand its performance. How you'll measure success depends on the goals you set initially, such as whether you sought to increase followers or improve sales.

