



Your Guide to:

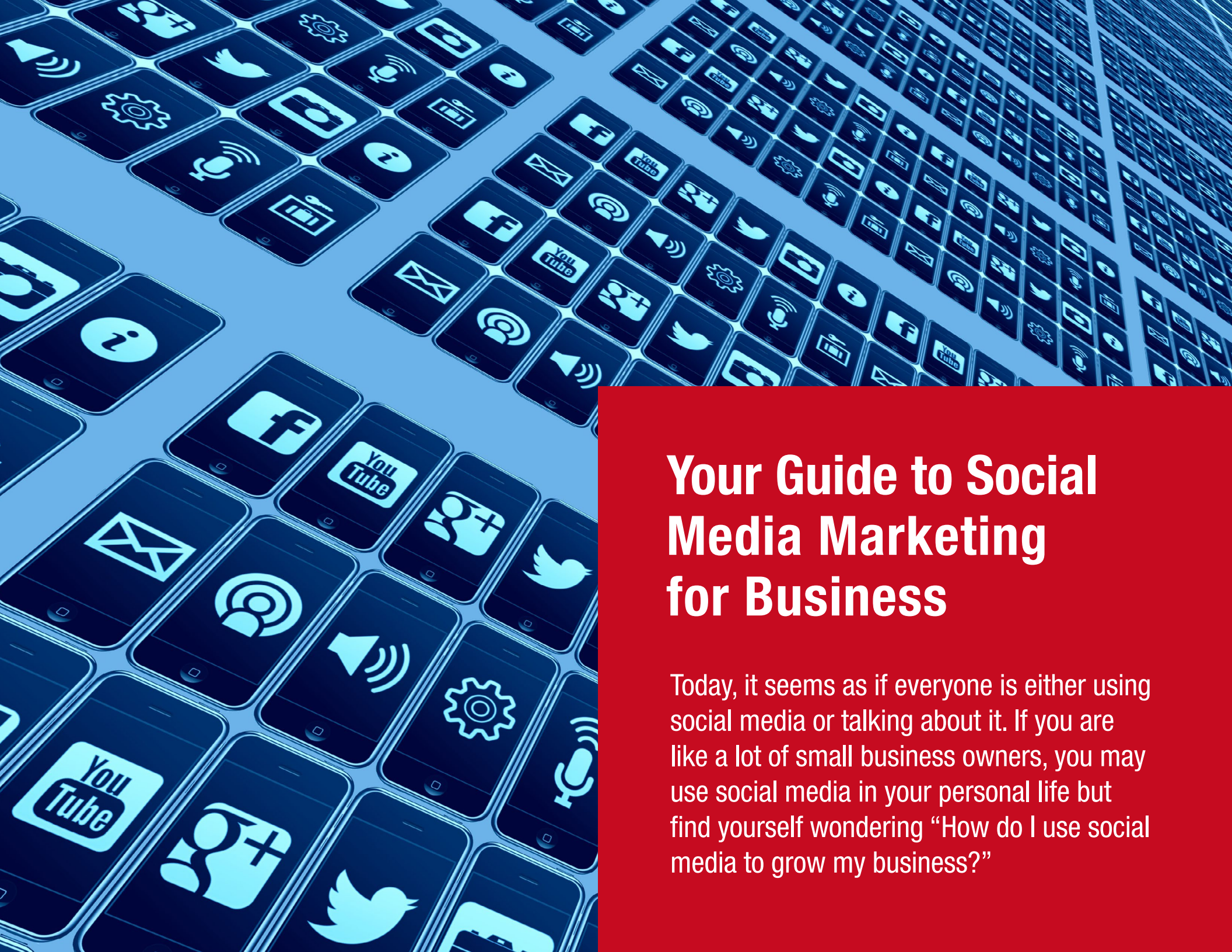
# **Social Media Marketing** for Business



Safeguard®

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# Your Guide to Social Media Marketing for Business

Today, it seems as if everyone is either using social media or talking about it. If you are like a lot of small business owners, you may use social media in your personal life but find yourself wondering “How do I use social media to grow my business?”

# Social media may seem like a complex puzzle, but this eBook will help you understand:

1. Why and how your customers use social media
2. What you can do to connect with them and offer them value
3. How you can put it all together with a step-by-step tactical plan to use social media to grow your business

## We want to make it easy for you to:



### Develop

Develop a game plan that can help you be successful using social media for marketing purposes.



### Provide

Provide reasons for potential customers to frequent your business and purchase your goods or services.



### Understand

Understand how to create engaging content that educates and informs.



### Learn

Learn skills for building customer relationships online.



### Cement

Cement loyalty in your current customer base.

As a bonus, the cost of establishing and maintaining a social media presence is very low compared to other forms of marketing such as paid advertising or direct mail. Becoming a social media marketer is a very cost-effective way to reach current and potential customers where they already are – on social media.

Whether you're just getting started or are already using social media to sell, this guide will help you get started with social media marketing and offer insights to sharpen your social media marketing skills.

# Social Media vs. Social Media Marketing



First, let's look at the differences between the activities of using social media as a consumer vs. using social media for marketing purposes.

When you add the word “marketing” to social media, a new world of customer engagement opens up to you and your business. So let's look at both definitions: “social media” and “social media marketing.”

By definition, social media is “The means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks.”<sup>1</sup> Consumers use social media to re-connect with friends and family on Facebook, comment on a YouTube video, share

pictures on Instagram, or ask a question in a LinkedIn Group. They also use social media to get the news and increasingly, to shop.

The definition of social media marketing is “A form of promotion in which people within businesses create, share, and exchange information and ideas with customers in virtual communities and networks.”<sup>2</sup> In short, it is networking and marketing through social media platforms.

Using social media marketing platforms, you can advertise goods or services, identify potential customers, and improve customer relations by sharing information and exchanging ideas in virtual communities.

<sup>1</sup> <http://webcomm.tufts.edu/social-media-overview13/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://vendesocial.com/blog/really-internet-marketing/>

Therefore, the *ultimate* goal of social media marketing should be to generate interactions with individuals who are ready to buy. Depending on your business offerings, many consumers do not want a heavy “pitch” over social media. It’s about establishing a relationship on line and then transferring that to a sale when they are ready to make a purchase.

While each consumer, across all age groups, is unique with different needs, behaviors and knowledge, social media marketing offers you the opportunity to connect with a greater audience early in the sales process, and help you manage and qualify leads. This way you are concentrating your “real world” efforts on who are ready to buy. They will also be more likely to buy from you because of the relationship established through your social media interactions.

Before you begin to market to consumers using social media you first need to understand the differences between the leading platforms and which consumers are using them.



“... the ultimate goal of social media marketing should be to generate interactions with individuals who are ready to buy.”

# Leading Social Media Platforms for Marketing

Popular platforms today include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Instagram and others. They are considered “social media,” but each offers unique advantages for both users and marketers. These platforms also have different demographics, user patterns and value to the consumer. Below is a quick snapshot of the platforms and uses.



**Facebook** is the largest social media platform which is used largely by friends and families to communicate with each other. A rule of thumb is that people on Facebook most likely know each other in the real world. These are usually friends and family members. Facebook users may also “follow” people and organizations such as celebrities and news/media sites – and businesses. As much as 71% of the adult population that uses the Internet uses Facebook and it reaches widely across all demographic groups with about 70% of users checking in daily. Facebook has grown exponentially since its inception and continues to absorb more consumer attention. You have to sign up for Facebook by starting a “page” from your personal Facebook account at [Facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com).

**Consumer Use:** keeping in touch with friends and family members by sharing updates; following people or groups that align with interests and values, getting and sharing news, viewpoints and information. Showing support and connecting through liking and commenting on posts.

**Marketer Use:** Listening, building community, having conversations directly with consumers, sharing stories and short posts to keep regular contact, promotion of micropublishing content. This platform works best by connecting on a personal level with sharing personal interests, hobbies and stories.



**Twitter** is used to find out what news items and opinions people are “talking” about. Twitter users follow people and organizations they find interesting or with whom they share common interests. Its use is more prevalent in the 18-49 age set with a fairly even spread across other demographics at about 23% overall. Thirty-six percent <sup>2</sup> of Twitter users are avid followers, checking in daily – many of these users check several times a day, but the number of daily users has fallen slightly. You can sign up for Twitter at [twitter.com](https://twitter.com).

**Consumer Use:** Hearing real time news. Sharing news by “retweeting” information or adding personal comments. Holding conversations. Participating in trending conversations. Seeing what people you admire are talking about.

**Marketer Use:** Listening and establishing direct contact. Regularly tweeting engaging and concise information, often with links to external news stories or curated content to establish and maintain trusted expert status. Promotion of micropublishing content, etc.



**LinkedIn** is mainly considered a “professional” social media site with extensive profile and resume information. It reaches a much larger percentage of college graduates, higher income brackets and more of those in the “career” ages. LinkedIn has the lowest daily check-in rate at only 13%, but 40% check in weekly and messaging can be more “targeted” to certain individuals and groups.

**Consumer Use:** Professional contacts, news, subject-matter expertise and discussions, job search or recruiting.

**Marketer Use:** Listening, direct contact in a “professional” environment, possible “business owner” lead generation; promotion of micropublishing content, networking.





**Pinterest** is an internet “bulletin board” where users “pin” pictures and links to articles or products that they find interesting. It has a much larger proportion of women and those with at least some college education, but reaches fairly well across other demographic categories. Nearly 50% of Pinterest users check the site at least weekly, and some on a daily basis. You can sign up for Pinterest at [pinterest.com](http://pinterest.com).

**Consumer Use:** Finding interesting “ideas” and information. Finding new products. Sharing a virtual bulletin board of their interests with others to connect with like-minded individuals.

**Marketer Use:** Listening and getting to know your prospects habits and interests. Getting a sense of how people spend their free time. Promotion of short form content (micro-publishing). Demonstrating “personal style”. Product promotion.



**Instagram** is a visual site where users post pictures along with Twitter-like statements. It is geared for and largely used on mobile devices. Correspondingly, it reaches a younger age set (59% in the 18-29 set) and also has wider ethnicity reach. Use is growing in all age groups with 30% of Internet users in 2015 as compared to 17% in 2013 and much of that growth is in those over 30. Over half of Instagram users check daily – many more than once a day and another 25% check in on a weekly basis. You have to sign up for Instagram on a smartphone by downloading the app from the App Store or iTunes or through Google Play.

**Consumer Use:** Publication of pictures and graphics of personal, inspirational or other statements, leisure activities.

**Marketer Use:** Similar to Twitter - listening, short posts to maintain regular contact, promotion of short-form micro-published content with graphic or photo and link, demonstration of “style” in an informal setting and direct promotion of products or services. In fact, nearly 60% of the top posts were of major brand products.

# How Consumers use Social Media - Before the Sale

The consumer purchasing process has changed significantly since the advent of social media. This is true for products or services used frequently but especially true when it comes to significant purchases. Many consumers have become immune to the tactics marketers used in the past to gain their attention. Why? Because the Internet has given them instant and unlimited access to information.

In 2011, Google conducted a landmark study that showed us how important social media is in the new marketing arena. The study showed us that today's consumer uses the Internet to self-educate and gain knowledge at the beginning of the sales process so they are already

informed and “empowered” to make a decision before they reach out to a sales professional.<sup>1</sup> With the increasing uptake of social media – this trend has only grown.

Traditionally, for large purchases, consumers looked to companies to provide information prior to making a purchase—whether it was a company website, sales materials or sales people. Today, buyers are not waiting for a sales pitch to tell them what they “need.” Three out of four Americans use social media to ask for input from their peers, check out peer-review sites and search for information online<sup>2</sup> and some consumers will even conduct research before purchasing so much as a toothbrush.

<sup>1</sup> [https://think.withgoogle.com/databoard/media/pdfs/the-new-multi-screen-world-study\\_research-studies.pdf](https://think.withgoogle.com/databoard/media/pdfs/the-new-multi-screen-world-study_research-studies.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheets/social-networking-fact-sheet/>

# Here's an example of the consumer purchasing process

## The consumer:



# How Consumers use Social Media - After the Sale



Social media has also had a significant impact on consumer expectations after a sale. Purchasers who are dissatisfied will often turn to social media to request assistance, demand redress or simply complain. Many companies have moved their customer service departments right to social media.

Businesses who provide customer service through social media can help maintain a good reputation and can even increase sales by turning a negative experience into a positive one on the open platforms of social media. The caveat is that if a company has a social media presence – it is essential that negative feedback is addressed directly – and quickly.

Consumers expect a response – and younger consumers expect an *immediate* response.

These younger consumers are also accustomed to having information readily available at their fingertips and have never been required to read an encyclopedia to learn about a subject. Questions or requests for instructions or other information should be quickly addressed as well. If they don't get it – they may loudly complain - on social media.

Because of this, it is vital that small businesses have an active presence on social media but once established, it is even more essential that the presence is maintained.

# Social Media Marketing – Becoming a Source of Information for Your Audience

Social media offers numerous ways to connect with consumers who are looking for the best products or services. Though, well-produced “sales” information should be used, you can attract more prospective customers by sharing your expertise and insights and in some cases - even entertaining them. You can target your prospects with precision by Micro-publishing.

Being a micropublisher essentially entails establishing yourself as a resource or “expert” through the creation of blogs, articles and short statements that you post or “publish” for your audiences to view or consume. This helps you stay in front of your customer with news or information that they find insightful and interesting or engaging and entertaining, without requiring you to spend a lot of time developing lengthy material that may not be read by time-strapped audiences.

Plus, the cost of establishing and maintaining a social media presence is very cost-effective compared to other forms of marketing. Many customers that you want to reach are currently prompted *only* by immediate needs and social media marketing can help you reach them right when they start looking for information – or even before then.

For example, you may write a short blog the differences between two types of product you sell without directly “selling” your particular item. The Tweets (informational and newsy), Facebook posts (more personal and relationship-oriented) and Instagram images (visually interesting) can all point back to the blog post. Because you were not conducting a “sales pitch”, this type of social media activity sets you up as a source of information and helps to establish you as an expert in your industry. When a customer is ready to purchase – they will be more likely to come to you.

In many ways social media marketing is similar to the networking that was done in the past and you may already be doing in the real world today. In the “real world” you meet people, tell stories, and give advice, and sell your product to a few of them.

## In the “social media marketing world” you:

1. Meet new people in virtual communities like Facebook and LinkedIn.
2. Share your subject-matter expertise, answer questions and offer insights.
3. Meet with a few of your social connections in the real world.
4. Sell your products to a few of them.

Additionally, social media marketing offers an opportunity to interact with groups that may not otherwise be reached. Targeting certain demographics such as younger consumers or women may be easier in this setting.

You can maintain the interest of current or past customers but future buyers can be the most common consumer of your online information. They aren't ready to buy and don't yet have brand affinity. However, they are researching and learning about the products they need or issues and concerns they have. This gives you an opportunity to become a resource.



# Creating a Trust Relationship with Your Audience



## With social media, you can build a relationship of trust by:

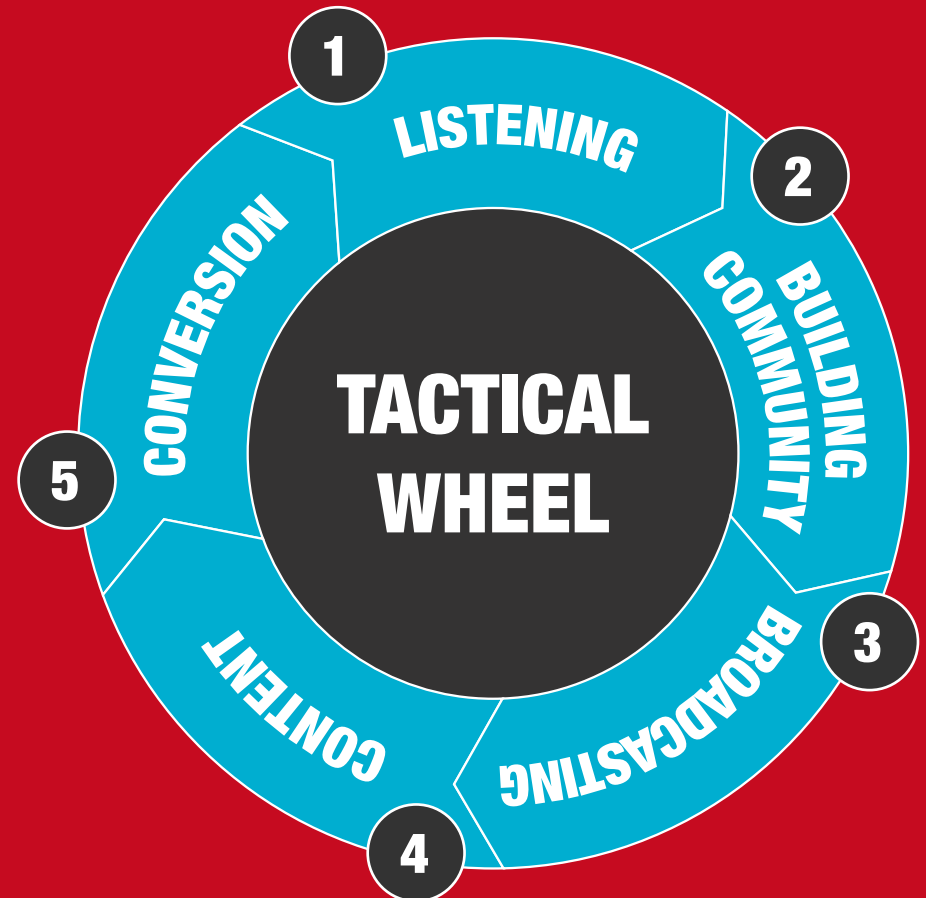
- **Knowing why they want to purchase** – Knowing what your customers’ motives and needs are can help you determine what kind of information is most useful or interesting to them.
  - **Knowing how they make decisions** – All consumers want to understand what they are buying, ensure that it meets their needs and know they are getting a good price. Desires, though, may vary by demographics such as consumers who want the “best price” now or buyers wanting specific characteristics. This gives you a way to target each consumer with tailored messaging.
  - **Knowing what may stop them** – Depending on what type of product you sell, you can address some of the roadblocks upfront. Your social media interaction can help address common misconceptions or even help them find ways to solve real issues.
  - **Knowing what they don’t know** – Social media interactions in the form of informational blogs can help educate your potential customer— and make you the “expert,” which means they will come back for more.
  - **Knowing how they behave** – Most consumers, including older Americans, will conduct Internet research before making a major purchase, and you should be there when they do. Establishing your presence and keeping their interest will increase the likelihood they will connect with you when they are ready to buy.
- Through social media marketing, you have access instantly to more people than you could possibly meet in the real world. With an effective strategy, you can connect with more qualified prospects because they are already online looking for advice. We will show you how to find them.

# Your Social Media Action Plan – The Tactical Wheel

- 1 Listening.** A specific way to watch what is happening online and identify influencers and potential customers so you can easily move into Engagement and create your community.
- 2 Building Community.** How to motivate your community of current customers, prospects and employees to engage with you so you begin seeing progress for your business.
- 3 Broadcasting.** How to post social media content to draw people into your environment and why that's so important.
- 4 Content.** How to develop compelling social content that always adds value.
- 5 Conversion.** How your content and messaging nurtures the relationship and moves the consumer to ask to talk to a salesperson or engage with your company at a deeper level.

Now that you have a bit of background on social media, the most popular platforms and how consumers are using them, you need to see how they can be used to provide value to your customers-to-be so that you gain their trust, stay top of mind and are in the position to be the one they think of when they are ready to buy.

The Tactical Wheel is your action plan to start growing your business right away using social media. The *Tactical Wheel of Social Media Marketing*<sup>1</sup> is a specific method of maximizing your efforts for each and every social media platform.



<sup>1</sup> <http://vendesocial.com/blog/tactical-wheel-makes-navigating-social-media-easy/>



# Developing a Strategy - The First Steps

## Determine your goals

Before you even enter the world of social media marketing, you need to define your purpose, and establish clearly defined goals. Start by addressing some key issues.

## What do you expect from social media marketing?

You are looking to social media to generate sales – but that is the end game. In order to make a sale, you have to generate leads. You have to start with establishing connections that lead to relationships with people who are not ready to buy, so that when they are ready – they come to you.

## What value will you deliver to your audience?

In order to engage potential customers, your interactions have to be valuable. What you share on social sites needs to be interesting enough that

potential customers will read your articles. You do this by offering fresh content.

- **Content** – Content that you share should provide value. It should be fresh and engaging and should not be a rehash of other information already out there. You are looking for potential customers to become interested enough to follow you and come back for more. This means the content must be informational but also concise, clear and catchy. Content can be your own writing, or it can be summarized with links to an original article from another site. This is called “curated content” and is highly valuable as a part of your whole strategy.
- **Trusted Subject-Matter Expertise** – There is an old saying in business – sell yourself first, your company second and your product third. When you are in a small business – *you* are often the company and the product and selling yourself is even more important. You can become the trusted subject matter “expert” through your social media marketing plan with good content, informational resources and consistent presence. More quality content and interaction means greater engagement. Remember, your potential customers are researching before they talk to you, and you can put yourself front and center with social media marketing.

## How much time do you plan on investing?

The goals of your social media marketing plan need to define how much interaction you provide. First, consider your time as an investment. Many experts recommend that you should plan on spending an hour or so a day on your social media marketing plan. This may be writing, posting, networking or answering comments. In some cases, you may get away with less but in other cases, you may need to spend a bit more time, depending on your level of automation (explained later) and what sites you choose.

## Setting up your social sites

Each social media site, whether it's Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or another site, has a profile that you are required to complete. This is a must do, and it has to be good. Each site attracts a different “type” of user and may have a different “style.” Your profile needs to fit within the site’s norm, but follow these best practices to make sure your profile stands out over your competition.



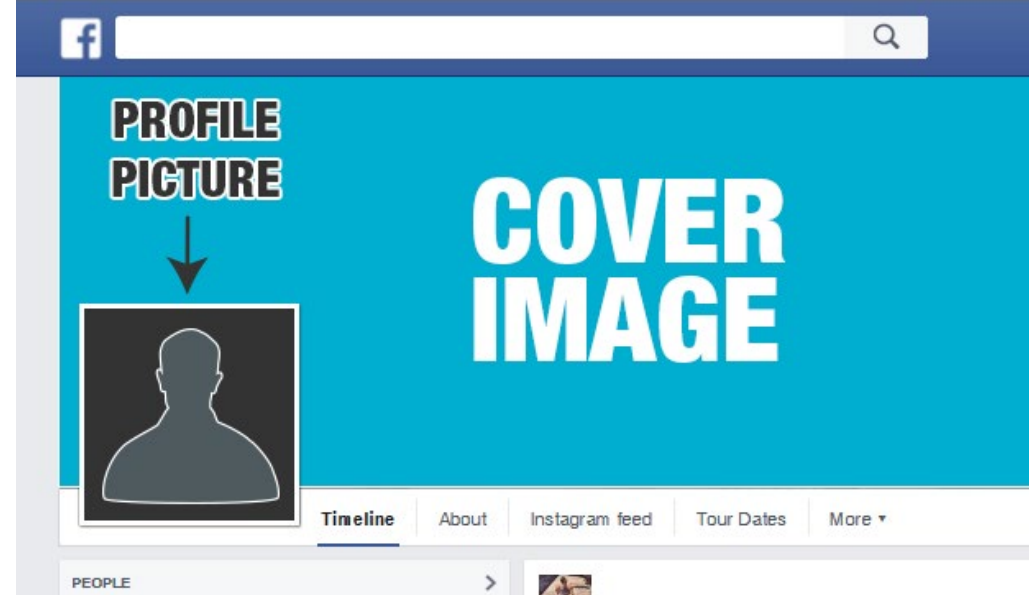
**“Many experts recommend that you should plan on spending an hour or so a day on your social media marketing plan.”**

## Writing a killer bio

Your profile or bio is your main page that will tell your audience about you. The page and its sections need to be informative and inventive. Writing the bio can be broken down into these rules:

- Don't "tell" them who you are "show" them by saying what you have to offer.
- Make sure the language is fresh, simple and engaging, and avoid "buzzwords" or industry jargon.
- Tailor your profile to your audience, considering the social media platform
- Be personal and likeable
- Give your potential clients a reason to follow you by keeping in mind their question "What's in it for me?"
- Revisit your profile regularly and update it as necessary

**“In all cases, you need a profile picture and possibly a background or header image.”**



## Tips for creating a visually appealing profile

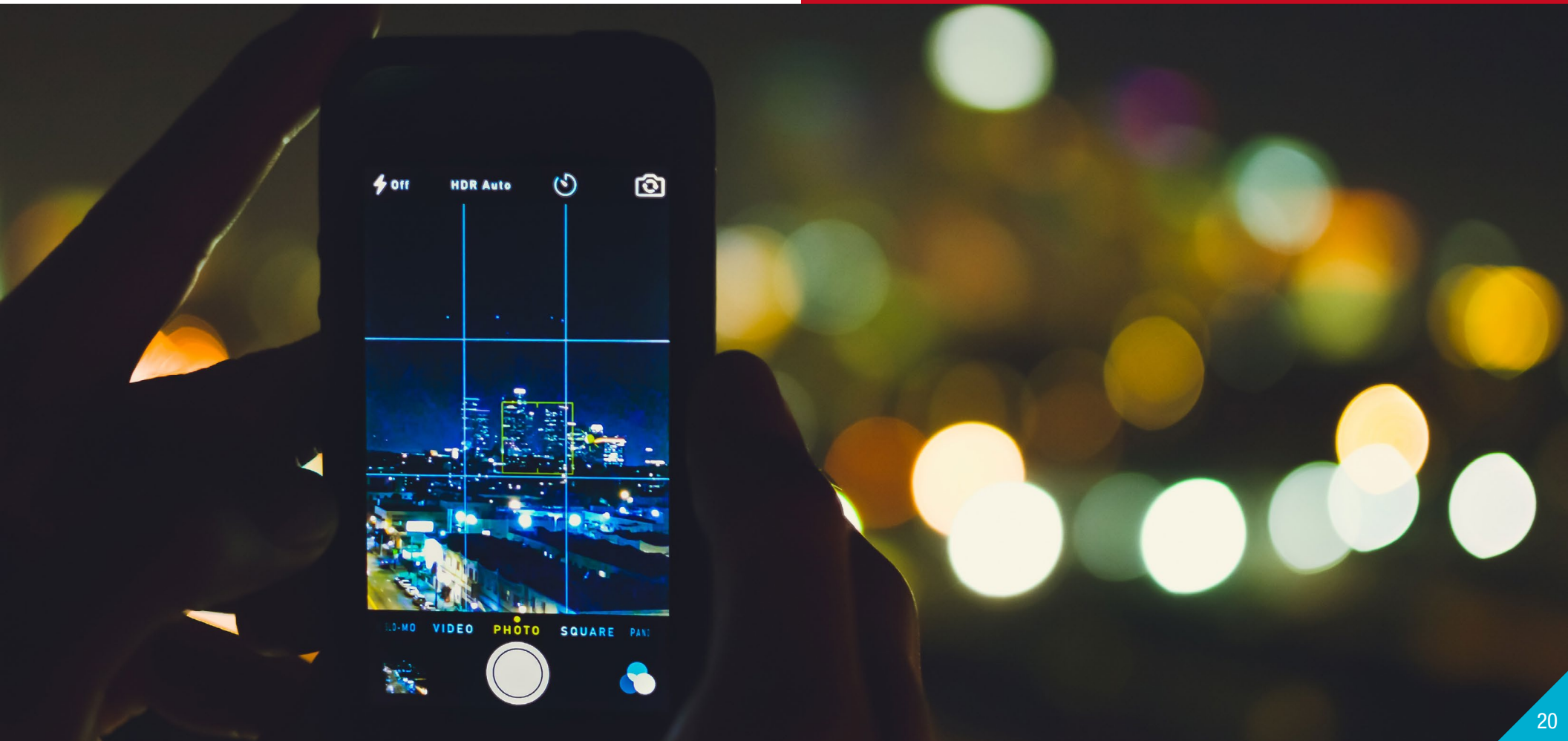
In all cases, you need a profile picture and possibly a background or header image. Your profile picture should be an image that conveys the personality you want them to see. Depending on the type of business, it may be a real picture of the "real" you, but in other cases may be representative of your product. Your header image can be graphics or a picture that captures the same style. For reference, here are some examples of profiles that are well constructed:



## Determining your social currency

Social currency is what defines your value. You share what makes you look good. On a personal site, people may take a view that sharing “exciting” stories or pictures makes them look exciting. In business, the content you share should reflect the style you want to portray. This is where you don’t share personal info or opinions but you can share educational and other information that you find interesting, fun or useful for your audience.

“... share educational and other information that you find interesting or useful for your audience.”



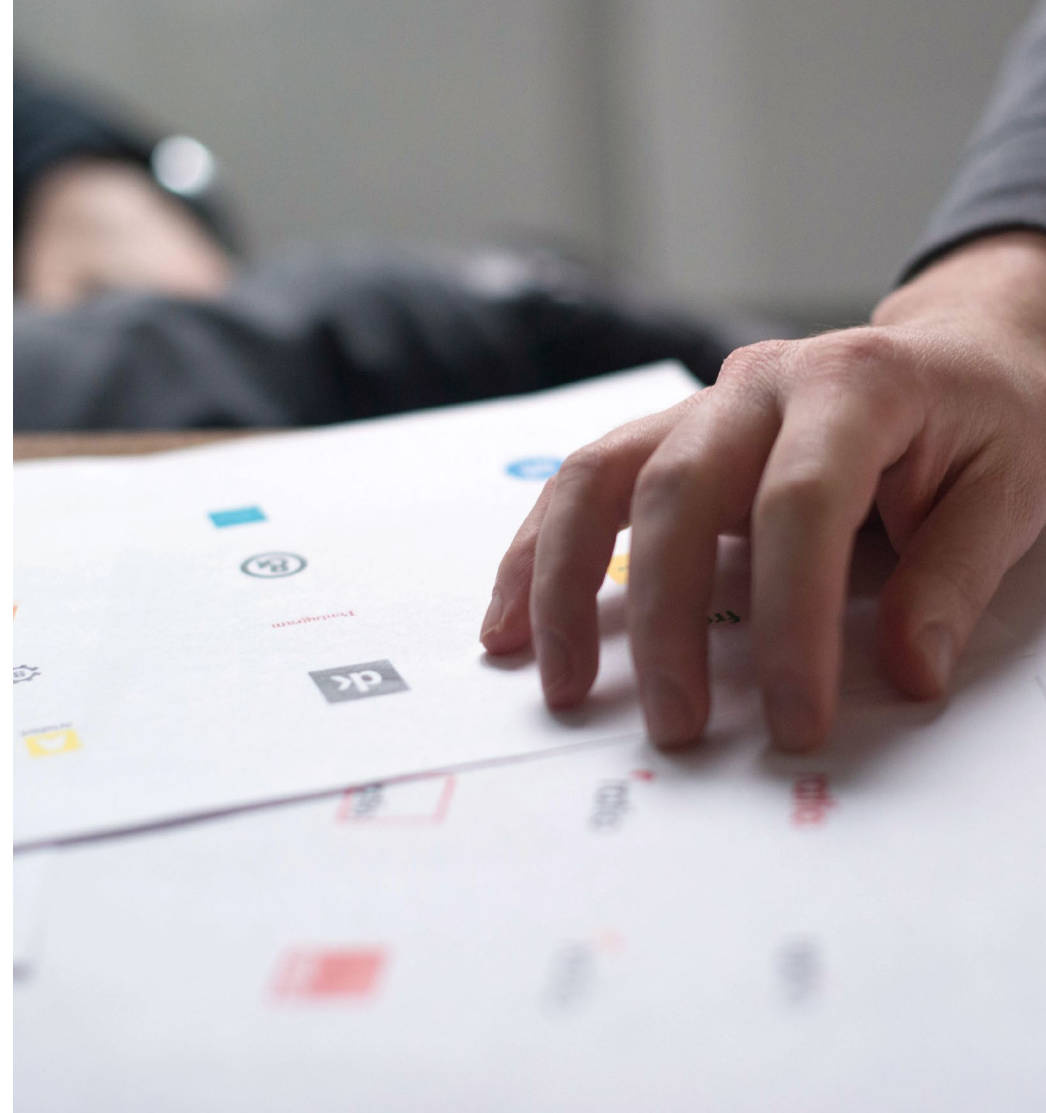
## Branding

“Branding” is the way that you establish your business identity so that you are memorable and is especially important on social media. Think about national product brands and how they project an image that you remember.

As an example, take Dove soap. Most likely, just the word “Dove” brings an image to your mind and that image was carefully crafted and promoted by Dove’s advertising campaign - which includes social media. Their women’s campaign shows images of “real women” who are different from the models generally seen in advertising, particularly beauty products. In addition to the difference in their models, they also feature minimalistic, white backgrounds which project a clean, modern, image.

This image forms Dove’s branding and is used, not only in their traditional advertising on television and in magazines, but also in their social media marketing. Dove is very active on social media with a presence on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. They even have their own hashtag, “#SpeakBeautiful.

While your social media marketing probably won’t be nearly as comprehensive, you still need to establish a brand identity. Your brand should project the emotions that you want to emphasize and show people what is best about your business and products, e.g. new and high-tech, luxuriant and indulgent, or family-friendly and affordable. Across your social media pages and accounts, and in physical materials that you have, your branding image should be the same.



“Your brand should project the emotions that you want to emphasize and show people what is best about your business and products.”

# Developing a Strategy - Part 2

Now that you know where you are going to start your social media networking and you have the basics on your approach down, you need a content strategy.

Content strategy is your overall approach to your social media marketing plan. You are looking to draw new customers and engage them with interesting and unique information. Your strategy should include content that offers:

- **Awareness** – Content that is interesting and informative about your industry in general.
- **Evaluation** – Content about your business in general, and benefits provided by specific products you sell.

- **Decision** – Content that is a “call to action,” encouraging them to contact you or purchase a product from you.

## What are your subjects?

You may already have some ideas, but Google is the “mother of all things” involving the Internet and it makes a big difference in how people find you. You need to know what keywords or key phrases people search or “Google.” This will be the subject matter of most of your blog posts, articles and content. These are important as part of any content you publish or posts you make. Google and other search engines rank content based on those key phrases and those phrases will help your posts show on places like Twitter.

For example if someone is looking for instructions on changing a tire, Google will identify content based on key phrases like “How to change a tire” or “changing a tire.” For a small business selling durable medical equipment, a key phrase might be “automatic wheelchairs” etc.



automatic wheelchairs

Google Search



## What types of content should you have?

Part of your goal is to attract and hold potential customers' attention. This means providing a variety of content which is randomly or regularly published throughout the month. Your content may include:

- **Unique blog posts** – Blog posts or articles written by you or for you pertaining to your industry and products provide the bulk of many content publishing plans. These articles can draw information from other articles, but they are unique to your site or page and include insights and combinations of information that can't be found anywhere else.
- **Curated** – Curated content can often be found from a news source, a professional association site or other site which is not owned by a competitor. Some curated content such as “About” or “How to” articles are particularly useful for your “awareness” funnel. This type of content will be most useful with a short statement about the subject and a link to the article or post. You can often introduce such content by pointing to a particular fact or piece of information and adding your own thoughts to it. For example, in the garden nursery business, an article titled titled, “Five Tips to Consider when Choosing a Fertilizer” might include an introduction such as “Getting your spring garden ready yet?”.

“Unique blog posts, Curated content, Videos, Links back to site, and Quotes.”



- **Videos** – Short, informational and even entertaining videos provide engaging content. Video links can often be found on YouTube or you can make your own. If you use someone else's video, make sure that you watch it and support the content and that it does not include another's sales information.
- **Links back to site** – Active links in all of your social media posts are essential. You want to draw potential customers to your blog or website for further engagement.
- **Quotes** – Inspirational quotes are a good and simple way to do a short, daily post. These can go along with a link back to your site, providing fresh content and encouraging engagement. Graphics for inspirational quotes can often be found on the internet or you can make your own fairly easily using WordArt in MS Word.



## Do you need images?

Yes! Images included with your posts can increase interest in the post itself by 30% or more. So, for optimal “uptake” of your content, you should include images with most posts.

You can find open source, completely free images on Wikipedia and some other “public” websites but many of the images on Google’s search are copyrighted. Companies like Canva, iStock Photos, Fotolia and Getty Images have high-quality, modestly-priced images which are termed

“royalty free,” meaning as long as you pay the small fee, you can use them in accordance with the user agreement.

For small businesses however, some of the best images will come from your own business – your products and employees. The more you can make the images “interesting”, the more they will be noticed. This may include photo editing using filters to change the color hues some or may simply include adjusting problems like “red eye”. One of the easiest ways to edit photos today – is from a smart device such as a tablet, using a free photo app such as PicsArt which you download from the App Store or Google Play.

BEFORE



AFTER



One other important note is to ensure that your website has social media “icons” installed. Your website developer should make sure that anyone who goes to your website can click on an icon to “like” your Facebook page and “follow” your Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest accounts. Any time you publish a blog or other information on your website, a social media icon should also allow them to “share” that blog or information.



## How often should you post?

How often you post depends on the particular site, but you should expect to be doing something on social media every day. Ideally you should post on:

- **Facebook** – daily or 5-10 times a week<sup>1</sup>
- **Twitter** – 5 times per day, but at least once, as a minimum<sup>1</sup>
- **Instagram** – multiple times per day, but at least once<sup>1</sup>
- **Pinterest** – several times per week<sup>1</sup>
- **LinkedIn** – 1 time daily, but at least once a week<sup>1</sup>

These are industry suggestions and don't cover every site, but are a good place to start.



Daily or 5-10  
times a week



5 times per day, but at  
least once, as a minimum



Multiple times per day,  
but at least once



Several times per week

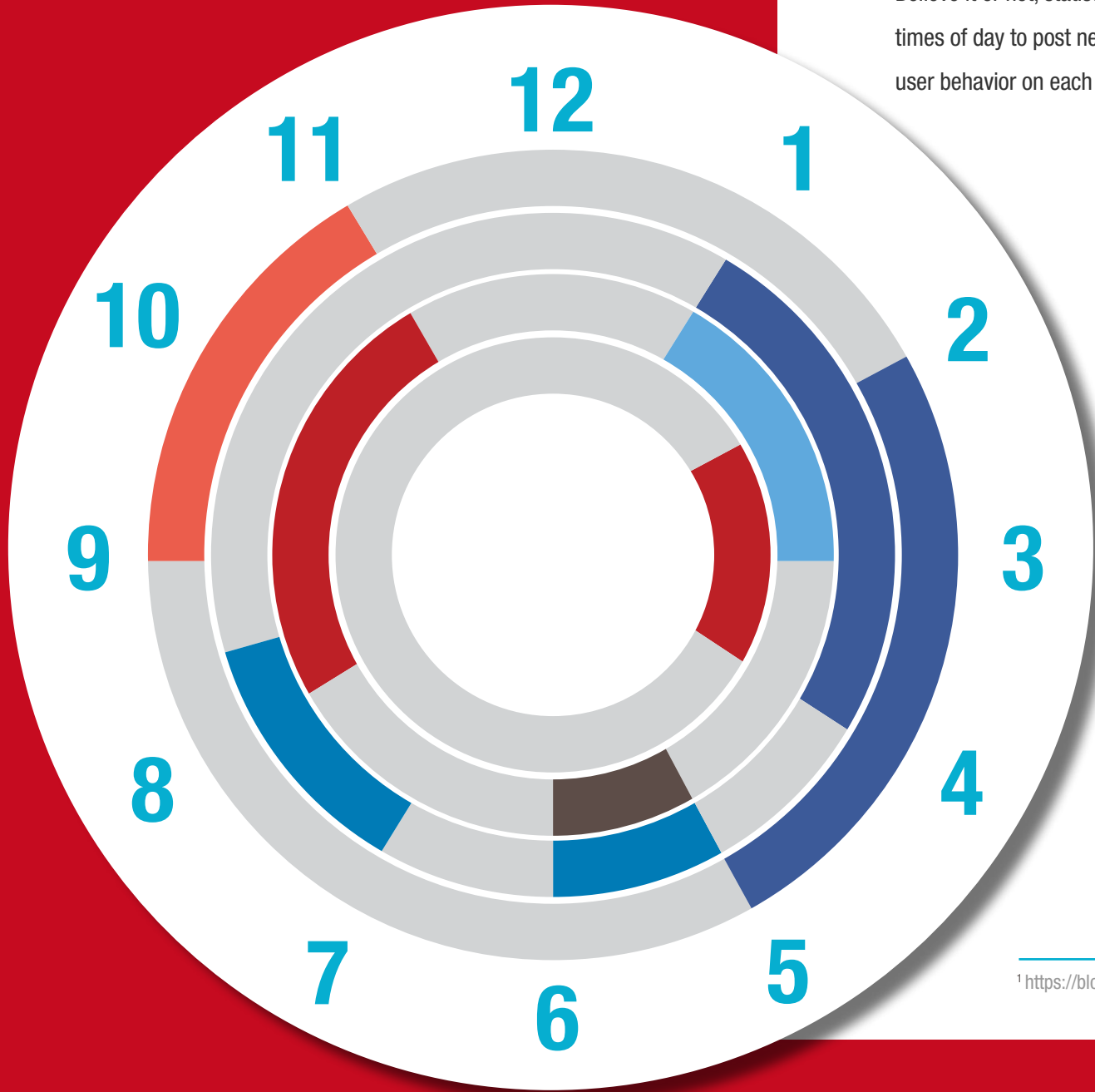


1 time daily, but at  
least once a week

<sup>1</sup><http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/01/09/frequency-of-social-media-use-2/>

## When should you post?

Believe it or not, statistics have been developed that have determined the best times of day to post new material. Each site is a bit different and is based on the user behavior on each platform.



- Google+** – 9 to 11 a.m. on weekdays<sup>1</sup>
- Facebook** – 2 to 5 p.m. on weekdays and 1 to 4 pm on weekends<sup>1</sup>
- Twitter** – 1 to 3 p.m. on weekdays<sup>1</sup>
- LinkedIn** – 7 to 8:30 a.m. and 5 to 6 p.m. on Tues, Wed, and Thurs<sup>1</sup>
- Instagram** – 5 to 6 p.m. on weekdays<sup>1</sup>
- Pinterest** – 2 to 4 p.m. and 8 to 11 p.m. on weekdays, all weekend<sup>1</sup>

Please note that the suggested posting times may change as user behavior evolves.

<sup>1</sup> <https://blog.bufferapp.com/social-media-marketing-plan>



## How to listen for leads

As part of your ultimate goal of selling more product, you need to “hear” social media “conversations” when they happen. This means “listening” to your social media.

Be ready to respond any time someone comments on a post, retweets or messages. This is your opportunity to have a conversation with a potential customer— or friends of customers—and it's too important to ignore. It is also critical that you respond to any current or past customer right away.

You can manually check every site for comments, and you can set alerts on most sites to email you for activity, but some tools like [Mention](#) and others can alert you any time you are mentioned online. The main issue is that you need a system to “listen” and it needs to be done daily.

You can also search on places like Twitter and Instagram for “hashtag” phrases that match your industry like #promoproducts or #promotionalhats for a company that sells customized garments. You will want to “like” Facebook pages, “follow” Twitter and Instagram accounts and join LinkedIn groups to find out what other people are interested in and what they are posting. This also allows you to make “comments” and engage with potential customers.

Example: #socialmedia #followme

## Develop your Action Plan

Your action plan should be a detailed list of social media activities that delineates everything for the month. It should include activities for:

1. Daily – post, listen
2. Weekly – write a blog article, share it in social media, comment or retweet a post, start a discussion (or comment on one) in LinkedIn, work on growing your communities
3. Monthly – make an offer of something substantial (discount, free evaluation, downloadable whitepaper, etc.), build your content plan for next month
4. Quarterly – develop your content strategy for next quarter



By planning ahead with a content strategy and a content publishing plan, you make your social media marketing a lot easier. A content strategy is a plan of issues or subjects that you will cover over the

next quarter or longer. You decide on subjects and titles and can jot down ideas or themes that you may want to cover and products you want to promote.

## An example content strategy might look like:

Topic	Funnel	Keyphrase	Source/Research
<b>July</b>			
Never Forget: The customer is always right	Evaluation	Customer Service	<a href="https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/65768">https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/65768</a>
What is open book management? Is it right for your business?	Awareness	Finance	<a href="http://www.inc.com/steve-baker/playbook-3-tips-to-start-open-book-management.html">http://www.inc.com/steve-baker/playbook-3-tips-to-start-open-book-management.html</a> <a href="http://www.inc.com/guides/finance/23178.html">http://www.inc.com/guides/finance/23178.html</a>
How to retain employees	Awareness	Hiring & Managing	<a href="http://guides.wsj.com/small-business/hiring-and-managing-employees/how-to-retain-employees/">http://guides.wsj.com/small-business/hiring-and-managing-employees/how-to-retain-employees/</a>
Topic: Top 5 Tradeshow Giveaways	Decision		
<b>August</b>			
Using social media for innovation in your business	Evaluation	Innovations	<a href="https://www.americanexpress.com/us/small-business/openforum/articles/9-easy-ways-you-can-use-social-media-to-inspire-innovation/">https://www.americanexpress.com/us/small-business/openforum/articles/9-easy-ways-you-can-use-social-media-to-inspire-innovation/</a>
Ecommerce trends in 2016	Awareness	Sales & Marketing	<a href="http://selnd.com/1sFoh0T">http://selnd.com/1sFoh0T</a>
Why customer service should always be important	Awareness	Customer Service	<a href="http://www.forbes.com/sites/shephyken/2015/02/12/regardless-of-the-economy-never-put-customer-service-on-the-chopping-block/#6376a81219fa">http://www.forbes.com/sites/shephyken/2015/02/12/regardless-of-the-economy-never-put-customer-service-on-the-chopping-block/#6376a81219fa</a>
Tips for managing your businesses expenses	Awareness	Finance	<a href="https://www.gosafeguard.com/print-services/index.asp">https://www.gosafeguard.com/print-services/index.asp</a>
Safeguard Design and Print Services	Decision	Hiring & Managing	<a href="https://www.gosafeguard.com/print-services/index.asp">https://www.gosafeguard.com/print-services/index.asp</a>
<b>September</b>			
Leading by Example in your business	Evaluation	Leadership & Management	<a href="http://www.fastcompany.com/1838481/6-leadership-styles-and-when-you-should-use-them">http://www.fastcompany.com/1838481/6-leadership-styles-and-when-you-should-use-them</a>
How do you innovate in your business?	Awareness	Innovations	<a href="http://www.fastcompany.com/3031092/how-to-create-a-culture-of-innovation-in-the-workplace">http://www.fastcompany.com/3031092/how-to-create-a-culture-of-innovation-in-the-workplace</a>
How to increase sales revenue	Awareness	Sales & Marketing	<a href="http://www.forbes.com/sites/jimkeenon/2014/06/02/the-four-key-areas-for-increasing-sales-revenue/#42af87c42664">http://www.forbes.com/sites/jimkeenon/2014/06/02/the-four-key-areas-for-increasing-sales-revenue/#42af87c42664</a>
Promo Blog: What is Net Promoter and why is it valuable in today's business environment?	Decision	Customer Service	<a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Net_Promoter">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Net_Promoter</a> <a href="https://www.netpromoter.com/know/">https://www.netpromoter.com/know/</a>

A content plan, also called a publishing plan, is a daily and weekly listing of Facebook posts, Tweets and images that you plan to publish each day. When you do this ahead of time, for the whole month, your

daily social media maintenance is much, much easier – all of the thinking and creating is already done, all you have to do is post.

## An example of a content plan might be:

Day	Date	Post	Funnel	Link
<b>Facebook</b>				
Thursday	1-Sep	Don't let changes in ecommerce trends get the best of you. Our strategists work hard to stay up to date on the latest trends, and these are the most popular sales and marketing ecommerce trends for 2016:	Awareness	<a href="https://blog.gosafeguard.com/blog/4-popular-ecommerce-trends-2016/">https://blog.gosafeguard.com/blog/4-popular-ecommerce-trends-2016/</a>
Friday	2-Sep	More often than not, innovation is the key to success. That's why we work with you to create a business culture conducive to new ideas.	Awareness	
Saturday	3-Sep			
Sunday	4-Sep			
Monday	5-Sep	Tradeshaw 101: Before you head out for your big tradeshow, there are a lot of things to consider. Do you have a giveaway for visitors? Do you know who your target customer is? Are you dressed according to this particular trade show's standards? Don't miss out on a great opportunity because you aren't prepared! Here's a list of tips for maximizing your tradeshow experience. Then, be sure to sign up for Safeguard's unique giveaway to get some ideas of your own {custom ID}.	Awareness	<a href="http://www.education.sanmar.com/fabric-blog/new-products-to-power-a-new-year-of-selling/">http://www.education.sanmar.com/fabric-blog/new-products-to-power-a-new-year-of-selling/</a>
Tuesday	6-Sep	Looking for ways to lead by example in your business? Wondering what, exactly, it means to be a leader, and how you can encourage leadership in your workforce? At Safeguard, we help business leaders develop strategies and skills to make their work a success. Here are five of the best ways we've found to lead by example in your business: {custom ID}	Evaluation	
Wednesday	7-Sep	There's no need to feel overwhelmed when buying office supplies! At Safeguard, we'll help you determine which supplies you really need, helping you cut costs and save time.	Evaluation	<a href="https://gosafeguard.com/office-supplies/index.aspx">https://gosafeguard.com/office-supplies/index.aspx</a>
Thursday	8-Sep	A good reminder to always consider the customer's needs:	Awareness	
Friday	9-Sep	Looking for ways to improve your customer service? Fortunately, there are a few tried and true tricks that are sure to keep your customers satisfied and always coming back for more, and we've put together these five ways for improving customer service. Looking for even MORE ways of improving your customer service? We have consultants on hand to help field your questions -- don't hesitate to call a Safeguard strategist today!	Evaluation	<a href="https://blog.gosafeguard.com/blog/improving-customer-service/">https://blog.gosafeguard.com/blog/improving-customer-service/</a>
Saturday	10-Sep			
Sunday	11-Sep			

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## Analyze, Test, Adjust and Re-adjust

Once you have implemented your social media marketing plan, after a month or so, you need to evaluate how it is working. This will help you identify the areas that are performing well, areas that may need adjustment and areas that need a whole new approach— or simply aren't worth your effort. Remember, time is an investment and you need to be spending it wisely. Evaluate your performance and measure your efforts by using marketing metrics.

### 1. Set a benchmark

After a couple of weeks, go back through your stats and find the average number of clicks, shares, likes and comments per post. This will be your benchmark or the starting point to use to measure additional engagement.

### 2. Test

When you post a new component like adding visual images or new types of curated content, did your likes and shares go up? If you changed your writing approach, did the stats change?

### 3. Adjust

Based on your results, adjust your content plan with inclusion of more items that are working well and the “beefing up” of things that could do better. Each site will have different results and adjustments will need to be made for each platform.

What works well on Facebook, may not translate to LinkedIn and, though the content you post on LinkedIn may be perfect as a Twitter link, you need a better “Tweet” to go with the article.



## 4. Setting your metrics

Metrics are simply the means to measure your performance. They should be specific, business-oriented and measurable over time.

You want to increase sales. That is your bottom line. But to do that, you need to generate leads. Your marketing metrics will determine how you can measure performance with statements like:

I need to generate an additional \$x in sales from Y# customers. This means I will need Z# leads from 30 Facebook Posts, 8 Pinterest links, and 60 tweets over the next month.



Realize that your start on social media will be slowly ramping up—probably over the first 3 months or more. By the end of 3 months, you'll be able to evaluate how well you're doing, how much time it's taking and which parts of your plan need reworking.

Making the whole plan work is easier with automation. Facebook has apps that will automatically post your Tweets. Other tools like ["Buffer"](#) and ["Hootsuite"](#) can help you create the content and queue it up to be posted on certain days at certain times. But you have to be engaged as well. The automation will save some manual posting time to free you up for interaction.



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# Once you have determined your goals you need to:

1. Pick your networks
2. Fill out your profile
3. Identify your social currency
4. Choose your strategy
5. Automate and engage
6. Analyze, test and adjust

