

Best Social Media Practices

1. Set Measurable Social Media Goals

Start by defining how you want social media to help your business.

Establishing objectives will help set marks that can be **tracked and measured**. This allows you to focus on winning strategies, and quickly pivot as things change.

Your strategy should encompass more than just collecting likes, shares, retweets and pins! Focus on making sure that each of your social media posts support a strategic goal.

A few common strategic social media goals and objectives include:

Build Brand Awareness: Get the public to know your name, with a positive perception of your business.

Gain New Customers: Drive traffic to your company social media page or website.

Strengthen Customer Service: Engage with potential customers by answering questions, or help existing customers with your products or services.

Increase Engagement: Interact with your fans/followers by giving them reasons to mention your brand and refer others to do business with you.

2. Choose the Right Social Media Networks

It's no lie: social media activity can be time-consuming. Trying to manage all of the networks will water down your resources and take away from the channels that bring successful results.

Use your target customer and their online behaviors, to determine which networks will work best for ***your products and services***.

Narrowing down the field for your small business social media strategy will give you more time to create the right content for the right followers.

Follow these tips for the most common social media networks:

FACEBOOK

Post on Facebook at least once a day, and always include a photo or graphic and call-to-action.

Studies show that posts with images generate more interaction. Further encourage engagement by asking a question, or using an exclamation point!

Hashtags are not currently a driving force behind finding content on Facebook, so use them sparingly (one at the most).

Best time to post on Facebook: 1pm-4pm

TWITTER

Tweet at least 5x per day. For brands, you should ideally be tweeting 10-30x per day, if enough relevant content can be generated.

If content is original to you, point followers to your website or blog. Also, curate relevant content that your users will find value in.

Use 1-2 appropriate hashtags to broaden your audience and gain additional followers. Keep in mind, that using more than two hashtags will lower your engagement rate.

Images are just as effective on Twitter as Facebook, so always attach them to your tweets!

Best time to post on Twitter: 1pm-3pm, Monday-Thursday

PINTEREST or INSTAGRAM

If these two photo-sharing social sites work for your type of business, post at least 1 photo a day.

Your photo content on Pinterest or Instagram can supplement other social channels which are more text-oriented.

Showcase photos of product and how it may be used in context. Give followers a peek into what goes on in your company's office culture, and the people behind your brand.

As always, start tracking the type of response your social media posting gains, so that you can figure out what content and schedule gets the best engagement.

3. Brand Your Social Media Profile Pages

The perception of your company's identity should be **uniform across all channels**. You're not only building a stronger brand, but also creating awareness and loyalty.

Make it easy for consumers to recognize your business by maintaining consistency across the following areas:

Logo & Tagline. Always use the same logotype for your brand. This is a huge visual which will stick with your audience. If you have a memorable tagline, maintain the same one everywhere (and try to use it in conjunction with your logo).

Imagery. Graphics and photos are other visuals which will resonate strongly with your consumers. You can customize virtually any social media page with images; use the same ones across networks to maintain a similar look and feel for your brand.

Company Description. Use a clear, easy-to-digest "about us" description that is consistent across all your pages. Get to the point in the fewest amount of words; your customers should immediately grasp what it is that your business can do for them. Add your website in this description if you have room.

Tone & Voice. What is the personality of your brand, and what kinds of words do you use to communicate? Connect with your customers in an authentic way, and in the same way across all social media.

Each social network page has size specifications for cover images and profile photos.

4. Content Quality Over Quantity

More is not always better! Just like on your website and blog, you'll want to generate **quality social media content** that is valuable to your customers.

A good social media content mix includes equal parts of the following types:

- Promotional
- Thought leadership
- Engagement with followers

Be sure that your social pages stay up-to-date with relevant and timely posts.

Create an editorial calendar to help organize and schedule your small business social media strategy over the course of 3 months. Revisit it at the end of that time period, and update the calendar to reflect content types which gained the most engagement.

5. Monitor Social Media Analytics

Taking a look at your social media analytics on a weekly basis will give you the data needed to support your goals & objectives.

There are a few ways to do this: through a dashboard like [Hootsuite](#) or [Buffer](#), with [Google Analytics](#), or by using the native tool that each specific social network may offer.

6. Check Out Competitors

To really witness current social media best practices for business, take a look at what's happening around your industry.

Examine how competitors manage their brand on social media channels, and which content generates interaction and engagement.

Find a few benchmark influencers in your industry type, to see how your own small business social media strategy can improve.

Then, follow and engage with them!

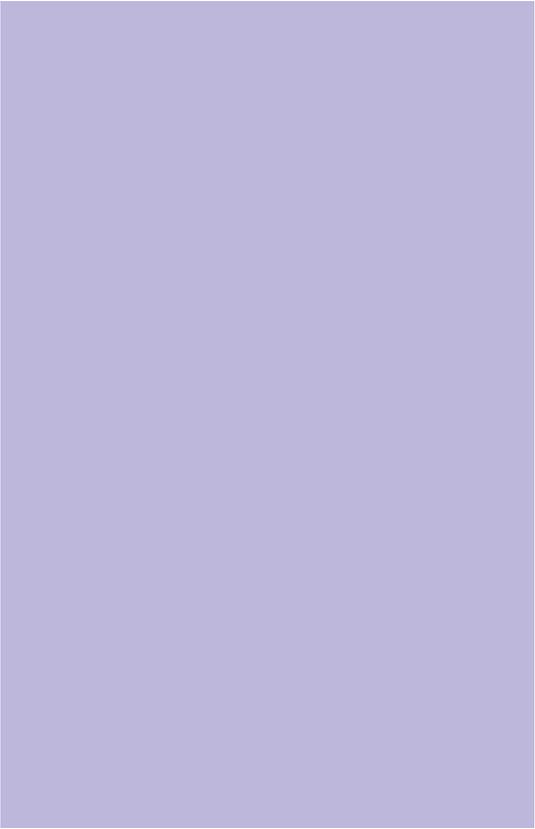
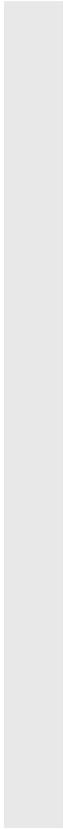
Key items to monitor are:

- branding
- popularity
- frequency of posts
- engagement
- types of content

7. Be Patient and Stick with It

It can take time to build a loyal following, by gaining trust and nurturing the relationship. While social media posting may be fleeting among the massive amounts of content generated every minute, it pays to implement a strategy and target the right consumers.

By following the above best practices with ***consistency and patience***, you'll be on your way to social media success!

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- Source: freshsparks.com/social-media-best-practices-for-business

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