

THE ULTIMATE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO SOCIAL MEDIA FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

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About

Social media is well and truly here to stay in the marketing world and, by all accounts, it will only further penetrate all aspects of life and work. Social media presents a huge opportunity for small businesses. More than 1 billion people are sharing, liking, commenting, and checking in on social networks, making it a necessity nowadays for your business to get on board and let the world know that you're open for business.

According a recent Social Media Examiner Report, the most effective networks for business are; Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest and Instagram. With the top 3 benefits of using these networks being; increased exposure, driving traffic to your blog/website and building a loyal fan base.

Despite the benefits of being active on social media, many resource-strapped businesses struggle with social media marketing. They're unfamiliar with the different social networks, don't feel they have the time to effectively managing, or in a lot of cases, they simply don't get 'it.'

This guide tackles all these issues head on. Whether you are new to social media in general or your efforts need a bit of a pick-me-up, this beginners guide is jam-packed full of tips for the major social media networks, exploring how to build a social marketing strategy from scratch, how to build a loyal following, how to measure your success, time-saving tips and tricks and much more.

Whilst this guide explores most of the major social media platforms, my best advice for getting started on social media is simple: Pick one network, build up a solid strategy and fan base there, then move on to another. Whilst it may be tempting to jump on every new and popular social media platform, it is better to do an excellent job of managing a few social media platforms the right way...than poorly managing several.

Let's get started....

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Introduction

This beginner's guide is designed to show you how to effectively use social media for your business. It will help you to develop and maintain a social media presence that engages your audience, builds your brand awareness and drives new business. Whether you're just starting out or need to refocus your existing efforts, this is your go-to resource for tips and advice on how to approach and tackle social media for your business covering everything from summaries of the major platforms, how to build a following, to how to measure your success and much more.

What is Social Media?

Social media is the means by which people interact with others in virtual communities and networks allowing them to create, share and exchange information and ideas. With the rapid popularity growth of these new technologies, social media has had a profound impact on the way people discover, read and share news, information and content. Social media encompasses all forms of 'user generated' content, from communication platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to multimedia services such as YouTube and virtual gaming platforms like World of Warcraft. It has become extremely popular as it allows people to connect and form relationships in the online world for personal and business use.

How is Social Media Being Used by Businesses?

Social media puts you out there and brings your solutions to your prospects' doors. As such, the benefits of creating a social presence on the web have been felt by every type of business and industry. Whether you have a restaurant, retail outlet or provide professional services, social media enables you to build your online reputation, increase credibility and help generate business and drive sales. By taking

advantage of social media, you can make your business gain more exposure, be more personable and generate and maintain long term connections as well as benefit from rich insights into your customers and industry. All of which can greatly benefit your business in the future.

Why Should You Join In?

With the surge in popularity in having a presence on social media, the chances are that your customers and competitors are already involved. On the web your customers will be talking, forming their opinions and it's where they're making their own recommendations to their friends and connections. Likewise your competitors may be already channelling in on those customers and reaping the rewards from engaging with, joining and listening to those conversations. People all around the world may be already talking about your business, so it's important that you get involved in the conversation and present yourself how you want to be presented on the web. Still not convinced? Here are 5 more reasons why you need social media for your business;

Social Media is Everywhere and Very Popular

Social media has become a central part of most people's lives, whether they are at home or on the go, people are actively engaging online. These users aren't just sharing updates from their own lives; they are searching for businesses, products, and services, and connecting with brands through their social channels. People of all ages and genders are actively using social media so no matter how old or young, or what gender your target audience may be, chances are most of them are already logging on and waiting for you to get started.

Social Media Sites are Free

Getting started on most social media platforms is completely free. Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, WordPress and LinkedIn all offer free accounts to users and businesses and in most cases signing up won't require anything more than an email address. There are features within some platforms that you need to pay for such as a Facebook Ad or a profile upgrade in LinkedIn, but for the purposes of getting started there's no upfront cost for most of the social networks.

Join an Existing Conversation

Social media provides you with an opportunity to listen to the conversations about your business and industry being openly discussed online. Not only does joining this conversation mean you can hear what is being said about you, it also means you can easily develop a richer understanding of your customers and benefit from insights into your target audiences. Moreover, it can also be used to create dedicated communities where you can host discussions about the products and services you offer or use your followers as an outlet for helping build new ones.

Social Media is Great for Customer Service

Customer service through social media is quickly becoming an expectation of consumers. Businesses have quickly come to realise that it offers a unique opportunity to showcase your customer service skills, promote more intimate business relationships with your customers and enables you to cater to your customer's needs instantly. In a world where everything is fast-paced, a quick response that showcases how much you care about providing a memorable experience can create a lifelong customer. Social media allows you to continually strengthen relationships with these customers through social engagement and because this engagement is publicly visible to others, it can introduce your business to a whole new audience and enable you to reach your next customer.

It Helps People Learn More About Your Business

Social media sites are becoming the go-to place for consumers who want to learn more about a business. People are online actively searching for information about anything from product reviews to informative articles and general entertainment so it is up to you to utilise this and use your social media presence to provide valuable, informative and entertaining news and updates to existing and potential audiences. If customers are already searching for you on Facebook or Twitter and not finding your business, you are missing opportunities to win new customers and inform and engage your existing ones so it is vital that you join in with social media and have your brand heard and seen online.

The Ultimate Checklist for Your Social Media Marketing Plan

'If you fail to prepare, prepare to fail.'

Whilst Benjamin Franklin wasn't speaking to the owner of a local cupcake company looking to start a Facebook page when he said those words, they still ring true when it comes to a business starting out on social media. Just as you wouldn't set up a business without a business plan, you can't just jump straight into social media, start aimlessly posting and expect the customers to come rolling in. Rather, you have to sit down, grab a cup of coffee and develop a clear social media strategy. While there's no one-size fits all solution, you can find social media success if you're armed with the right questions to get you started. After all, a plan equals focus and focus is what is going to drive your business forward online.

What Objectives do I Want my Business to Achieve by Using Social Media?

Whether you want to use your social media presence to gain exposure for your brand, directly educate and interact with your customers, promote specific products and services or all of the above, clearly identifying your objectives is the critical first step towards a successful social media presence. Identifying your objectives in the beginning ensures a multitude of critical elements of your social media marketing, it allows you to effectively tailor your content and posting schedule, provide value to your customers, right through to helping you accurately measure your success as you will be aware of the most appropriate metrics to track efficiently.

Common Social Media Objectives

- Build Brand Awareness
- Drive Traffic to Website
- Provide Customer Service
- Engage with Fans
- Establish Thought Leadership
- Launch New Products or Services
- Generate Leads and Increase Sales
- Research and Insights
- Build Your Community
- Improve SEO
- Competitive Analysis

What is the State of My Current Social Media Use?

If you are already present on social media, you need to take a good hard look at your content from the eyes of a new (or potential) fan or follower. There is a whole host of important questions you need to ask

yourself when you look through your online presence. Here's a few taken from the checklist I use when I conduct a Social Media Audit;

- Assess their presence: has it been thought through? Profile/cover photo/about section completed, effective and branded?
- Can potential followers immediately get a sense of company culture, products and services on offer?
- Content: How does their content support their strategy? What content receives the most clicks, likes and shares? Are they sharing engaging content? Do they encourage engagement? Offer something valuable/useful? How often is it updated? Are they engaging back with fans? Do they use hashtags effectively? How do they use images to tell the company story?
- How are the individual platforms being used to drive traffic to the main web presence? Is it clear what the next step is that they want fans/followers to take? Call to actions in tweets/pins/posts?
- Record numbers of followers and following – are they both relevant and targeted audience?
- When the last time was their Twitter / Facebook/Pinterest etc. presence was updated?
- What feedback do they get from followers?

Who are My Target Audience?

Determining the audience that you want to reach and engage with on social media is fundamental to your strategy. Whether your target audience is your current or potential clients or customers, affiliate businesses, thought leaders or all four, your aim is to create a successful social media strategy that matches and is tailored towards understanding and acting on your target audience's behaviours online. Creating Buyer personas helps you define and target the right people, in the right places, at the right times with the right messages. When you learn important factors about your target audience from their age, job status, income, interests, problems, to their likes, dislikes, motivations, where they spend their time online and in what format they like to digest their content online then it becomes easier to target them on social media. The key is to remember that the more specific you are the more successful and targeted you are going to be with your social media strategy that will bring real results and conversions for your business.

What Platforms am I Going to use for my Business?

What platforms you choose to use will ultimately depend on where your customers are and which ones are best suited for your business. Spend the time researching where your current customers are online and what platforms can be best utilised with your resources and business. The key is to not spread yourself too thinly across lots of social media platforms just because you think this will gain your business more exposure, rather it is much more effective to run a handful of platforms consistently and efficiently and to spend the time reviewing the platforms you are on to make sure they are as effective as they can be. You should also keep up to date with research into new technologies and platforms that your business could potentially utilise in the future.

Selecting the Right Social Media Platforms for Your Business

Each social media platform is unique, with its own best practices, style, and audience. The key to choosing the right social media platforms relies on you having a clear understanding of your objectives for social media, your target audience and what resources/ information you have to share. Simply put, choose the ones that best fit your strategy and the goals you want to achieve on social media. You don't have to be on them all—just the ones that matter to you and your audience.

To help you decide the best platform, ultimately ask yourself these questions;

- **Purpose** – What information do you want to share with and communicate to your audience?
- **Format** – In what format is the best way to present this information? Videos, Podcasts, extended pieces of writing etc.
- **Platform** – Which social media platform will allow me to share this message best and which platform has the correct audience that I want to reach?
- **Time** – How much time can I devote to a social network? Aim for at least an hour per day per social network. Once you get going, tools like Buffer can help you effectively manage your time.
- **Resources** – What personnel and skills do you have to work with? Visual social platforms like Pinterest and Instagram require good quality images. Social platforms like blogging emphasize quality content. Do you have the resources to create what's needed?
- **Audience** – Where do your potential customers hang out? Which social network has the right demographics for you?

Have I Done my Research?

A successful social media presence is always aided by a good, solid foundation of prior research. You should look to do initial research into key areas such as your competitor's social media, your target audience demographics, the latest trends and news in social media, marketing and business as well as many others. Conducting research and paying attention to changes in your industry and audience for example should also be a regular and active occurrence as things, especially social media, evolve and change so you need to keep up to date to ensure your strategy is as relevant and effective as possible.

- **Market Research** – Who is your target audience? How do they behave on social media? Where are they online?
- **Competitors** – Which platforms are your competitors using? Are they directly engaging with prospects online? What are they good at online? In which areas could they improve? Can you get case studies? (Both successful and unsuccessful examples?)
- **Latest Business and Social Media News, Trends and Techniques** – Do you know the latest techniques on your social media platforms that are effective? What is changing in social media and/or business that could affect your marketing?

Am I Clear on My Marketing Voice and Tone?

The temptation at this point might be to jump right in and start sharing. Before you do however, it is crucial to cultivate a voice and tone of your marketing that effectively encompasses your brand.

To help you with this, start with questions like these:

- If your brand was a person, what kind of personality would it have?
- If your brand was a person, what's their relationship to the consumer? (A trainer, friend, family member etc.)
- What do you want your customers to think about your company?
- Describe what your company's personality is not
- Are there any companies that have a similar personality to yours? Why are they similar?

Who is Going to set up and Maintain my Businesses Social Media Platforms?

In the beginning you will need to decide who will implement and maintain your social media accounts. Whether you want to run them in-house or hire a social-media marketing manager or firm, you need to ensure that the person who is in charge of your platforms can effectively represent your brand and has the know-how to create and maintain a successful social media presence. That person is going to ultimately control how your business is presented to others in the online world so you need to be absolutely confident that they are the right person for you and your business.

Have I Chosen My Core Topics?

The key to a successful content strategy is finding the core topics you want your business to be known for and the topics that attract and keep the attention of fans and followers. What topics or categories best represent your company? For most this is a combination of 3 areas,

- **Your Passion** - the topic you are passionate and love to talk about
- **Your Assets** - the topic you're known for and skilled and trained in
- **Market Reality** - is there a demand on social media for the type of content you are offering?

What Resources/ Content do I Have at my Disposal?

Each social media platform has a certain type of content that is best suited towards it, for example Pinterest is inherently visual and as such requires good-quality and memorable images to be effective. From this, you need to understand what type of content that the platforms you are using is most effective and importantly what content resonates best with your audience. Once you are clear on both these aspects, you will be able to form an effective content strategy with maximised effectiveness. It is important that you share with your audience a diverse and interesting mix of content types that encourages engagement so you need to think about the types of questions you will ask, updates you will share and ultimately what resources you have that you can utilise and repurpose for your social media platforms.

What Should I be Posting?

A quick glance through any social media article, research and blog post will show an emphasis and push towards sharing visual content. This trend towards the visual has plenty of anecdotal evidence too, with

it being a widely known fact that image posts get more views, clicks, re-shares, and likes than any other type of post. On Facebook, photos get 53% more likes, 104% more comments and 84% more click-throughs on links than text-based posts. Similarly for Twitter, in a study of over two million tweets from verified users across a number of different industries, Twitter found that photos have the greatest effect on retweets. Photos average a 35% boost in Retweets with Videos getting a 28% boost. What does this mean for your business? Simple. You must prioritise producing good quality visuals in your social media content strategy.

So now we have established that you need to incorporate the visual into your content strategy. It's time to take a look at what elements should make up your other content. There are hundreds of rules, strategies and theories on the best way and most effective ways to structure your content, the most used and most simple but effective strategy I use is the 70:20:10 rule.

The 70:20:10 rule

As a general rule of thumb, the rule states;

- 70% of posts should add value and be brand and business building, stuff that your followers will find interesting, valuable and insightful and that supports who you are as a company.
- 20% should share ideas or content from other sources e.g. blogs, digital PR, websites, other social media channels etc.
- 10% should be self- promotional - your offers, discounts, marketing and promotional, sales etc.

21 Quick-Fire Example Content Ideas

- **Business Tips:** People love to hear valuable business tips.
- **Humour/Relatable:** Whether it's a funny meme or something funny that's happened in your life or your business, share it.
- **Inspiration/Motivation:** Inspiration is the number one most shared type of content across every social media platform.
- **Open-Ended Questions:** People love to talk and they love to answer questions.
- **Offers and Deals:** Did you know that getting deals is still the number one reason that people like brands on Facebook? We all love a good deal.
- **Behind the Scenes/Sneak Peeks:** People love to feel like they're a part of what's happening in your business.
- **Opinions:** You can give yours and/or simply ask for theirs. People love to give their feedback and feel like their voice is being heard.
- **Industry News:** There's a huge value proposition in this. Firstly, you are educating your community on things that are happening in your space or in your niche. Secondly, doing this routinely will help you become an industry news or thought leader.
- **Fill in the Blanks:** It's an alternative way to phrase a question and the best ones only require a one or two-word answer, which makes it easier for your fans and followers to answer and engage with.

- **Strike Up a Conversation:** Take the time to strike up a conversation. It's a great way to build relationships.
- **Testimonials:** Let people know that other people value your services or your products.
- **Open Q&A's:** Are a great way to provide value and get some real-time engagement with your followers.
- **Polls:** You can use a poll for a number of different things like collecting opinions and/or ideas. Polls are a great engagement tool, but it's also a great way to get great information.
- **Caption a Photo:** Asking your fans and followers to caption a photo normally elicits good engagement.
- **Make Predictions:** People love predictions. They want to know what you think.
- **Crowd Source Ideas:** Ask other people for ideas. Whether you're getting ready to do a new product or anything of that nature...ask!
- **Highlight Your Customers:** Let your social media followers know that you value them. It's important.
- **Tech Tips or Tools:** People love tools and they love tech tips.
- **Advice:** if you have some great advice and you feel like its valuable then share it.
- **Share Video or Audio Clips:** In some cases video and audio posts are more impactful than a simple text based or image post.
- **ASK!:** Ask your followers what content they want to see.

What is my Publishing Schedule?

Whilst it is wonderfully easy for you to be told from a social media expert that you should post 2 Facebook posts a day, 10 Tweets and 2 Blog posts a week for example, the ironclad and definitive answer to the questions 'What, When and How often should I post?' is simple: It depends. Everything about the social media experience is about your individual audience and niche. What works for you might not work for me... the important thing is that you experiment and learn what does work for you.

Your publishing schedule is going to be ultimately dictated by three things, your business capabilities, the platform you're using and your audience needs. In the beginning you will need to experiment to find a publishing schedule that works best for your business, goals and readers and is the perfect balance of what you want and what your audience wants. Part of this consideration is also understanding the nature of the platform you're using to publish and whether it is one such as Twitter that favours several short updates per day or Facebook where posting 7+ times a week is effective. Ultimately, when you are creating a publishing schedule you need to ask yourself, Can you keep this schedule consistently? Can you always publish high-quality content at this rate? And will you have enough content for this schedule? Once you've discovered the most effective schedule for you, being consistent with your publishing schedule has the benefit of increasing SEO value, maximising value and engagement from readers and encourages readers to come back regularly for more.

How often should you be posting?

As you have come to realise, everything about a business social media experience is unique to you. There is no one size fits all approach to what content to post, just like there is not one for about how often to

post to social media either. Some of the factors that will impact your specific sharing frequency may include your industry, your reach, your resources, the quality of your updates and the social network you're using. The best way to discover the ideal posting frequency is by looking at your own analytics and several tools available in the market, these are a great way to show you the best time of day to post on your social media platforms, how often and even when your audience is online. So what are you to do if you are just starting out on these social networks, with no audience and no history? This is where best practices come in. As a good example, SumAll, which compiled timing research from sites like Visual.ly, Search Engine Watch, and Social Media Today has created a great visual resource of what their extensive research found in terms of timing.

- **Twitter** – 1-3pm weekdays
- **Facebook** – 1-4pm and 2-5pm weekdays
- **LinkedIn** – 7-8:30am and 5-6pm Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday
- **Tumblr** – 7-10pm weekdays and 4pm on Fridays
- **Instagram** – 5-6pm weekdays and 8pm on Mondays with a sweet spot at 6pm
- **Pinterest:** 2-4pm and 8-11pm weekdays with weekends being the best
- **Google+:** 9-11am weekdays

How am I Going to Ensure my Business Branding is Representative and Consistent?

Having a social media presence is a great way to show a wider audience who you are, what you stand for and ultimately why they should love you. From this, it is important that you know clearly what your brand stands for and how this is going to be conveyed consistently and accurately across your platforms. This consideration needs to be applied to everything from the voice you want for your brand that can be consistently applied across all your posts to the creative aspects of your platforms- that is the overall presentation including the colour scheme and typography. By setting consistent guidelines over the presentation and integration of your branding into your social media platforms it ensures that all these factors support and are in line with your overall branding and help reinforce your message and brand.

Am I Going to Have to Create a Written Social Media Policy for my Employees?

If there are going to be several different administrators of your platforms or you run a business with staff members who have personal and/or business social media accounts, it is well worth creating a social media policy for your staff to sign so everyone is clear on their responsibilities and what is deemed appropriate and inappropriate behaviour when they are representing or discussing your business online.

Have I Considered My Mobile Strategy?

With ever increasing numbers of people accessing the internet and social media platforms from their mobile devices, it is vital that you optimise your profiles for mobile users and give them a mobile friendly experience. Therefore you should test and experiment with your platforms to see how they look on both your desktop and a variety of other mobile devices to ensure you provide a seamless experience for

those visiting your social media platforms no matter what device they are viewing them from. When assessing your site from different devices, you should check for several key areas such as; do your images still remain high quality? Are the social media sharing buttons clearly positioned and working properly? If text is used, it is readable on a small screen? The time you spend to perfect your platforms from your desktop should also be spent on making your site work for mobile too, if you fail to do so then you could lose traffic and sales as you will not be providing users with a good experience.

How am I Going to Measure the Success of my Social Media Marketing Efforts?

Tracking your social-media marketing metrics is a fundamental part of the social media marketing process as it helps gauge which tactics are successful and which areas are in need of improvement. Put a plan in place that allows you to track, measure and assess your results consistently to see what content/strategies resonates best and to ensure you are successfully meeting your social media objectives and if they are still relevant to you. Adjust your strategy and your content when appropriate to keep your social media content fresh and your information topical. The more you post, the more you'll discover which content, timing, and frequency is right for you.

Ultimately, Have I got a Clear Strategy?

Having a clear idea on every aspect of your social media marketing strategy is key to its success. Ultimately, you should easily be able to answer confidently and with clarity the below questions that form a basic social media marketing strategy. Part of maintaining a strong, successful presence is also to regularly assess whether certain aspects of your original strategy have changed (For example are your objectives still the same? Is there a new social media platform that your audience is using?) and then adjust your efforts accordingly. As you become a regular participant on social media you will find ways in which you need to improve certain areas and areas in which you excel in, so never stop learning and listening to what your audience and your analytics tell you.

Keep referring back to this handy checklist;

Setting Goals

- Why have I joined social media?
- What is my brand's overall purpose?
- What does my business aim to achieve with social media?

Audience

- Who is our target audience?
- Which social networks do they use?

- What topics and sources of information are most important to them?
- What problems can I help them solve?
- What jobs can I help them complete?

My Brand

- What is my brand voice?
- What is the overall tone of my social media updates?
- What emotions do I hope to convey through my brand's messaging?

Content

- What types of content should I post on which social platforms?
- What type of content best supports my content marketing aims?
- What are the main topics, categories or messages that support my brand?
- Should I use social media to provide customer service?

Content Creation

- What realistic resources do we have?
- Who should set up and maintain my company's social media accounts?
- What is the workflow from content creation to publication?
- How often should I post new content on my social networks?
- How does social media fit with our other campaigns?

Measuring Success

- How will I measure ROI and define success with my social media strategy?
- What is working with my social media marketing efforts?
- What is the customer journey from search to purchase?
- Where does social media fit within my funnel?

24 Best Practices for Social Media Marketing Success

Want to ensure your social media presence is ultimately going to be a successful addition to your marketing strategy? Take note of these 25 best practices!

Have Goals and Objectives

Like every other marketing and business initiative, you need to have a goal or objective that you want your social media presence to achieve. Whether you want to use it to improve brand awareness or as a new outlet to interact with customers, having clear objectives for your platforms helps to optimise their reach and impact. In addition, having well-defined objectives also makes it clearer for you in what to measure for your return on investment. It is also worth noting that return on investment with social media marketing cannot always be measured in money. Whilst it can drive sales, the real power of social media marketing is in building relationships with customers. Whatever your objectives, make them achievable and relevant for your business and remember as you progress these objectives may change.

Portray Yourself Consistently

It is important that before you engage in social media that you are clear on what kind of image you want to portray of yourself and make sure to keep it consistent across all platforms. This consistency equally applies not just to the 'voice' you portray but also to the creative aspects, that is the overall presentation including the colour scheme and typography. If your brand or company uses certain colours then be sure to apply these consistently across the presentation of all your social media platforms. This also extends to a company logo or picture, make sure they are up to date and reflective of the image you want to portray. Having a social media platform is a great way to show a 'human' side to your business that customers appreciate and prefer. From this, it is important to have an idea of what voice you want for your page that can be consistently applied across all your posts, especially if your company page is going to be managed by several different contributors. In general, avoid generic corporate speak and replace it with your own unique voice and customers will be more drawn to and engage with you. By setting consistent guidelines over the presentation and integration of your branding into your page it ensures that all these factors support and are in line with your overall branding and help reinforce your message and brand across all social media platforms.

Be Where Your Customers Are

It's important to have a presence where your customers are looking to interact with you. To find out where you should be there are two easy ways; research the demographics of your intended social media platforms and also ask your customers yourself. When you start researching what platforms you think are best for your business, be sure that their main audience are the ones you want to target. The other option is for you to ask your existing customers where they are active online; this will then help guide your platform choices.

Get In The Habit Of Checking The News

If you're not already doing this at least once a day, you need to start. Get in the habit of checking both industry news and the news in the world. You don't need to read an entire newspaper and several journals, just look to bookmark a few key sites and blogs and at the very least, skim the headlines. Social media covers all aspects of people's lives and the more you understand about them in a wider context, the more you can understand where your brand will fit into your followers' newsfeed. The added benefit of scanning the news daily means it will also help you to find real time opportunities that you can utilise for your social media content.

Learn To Manage Your Time Effectively

On average, 64% of marketers spend at least 6 hours a week on social media. As more social media platforms, tools and features are added into your marketing mix regularly, it can become overwhelming to keep on top of your timing and not to have your social media management impact your other duties. Timekeeping is one of the most vital skills for an efficient social media marketer, so make sure you're getting everything done by creating checklists for regular tasks and using social media tools that help you work smarter.

Focus on Building a Community Rather Than a Number of Followers

The number of people following you can only take you so far. Having 10,000+ followers is noteworthy, but at the end of the day it doesn't matter how many followers you have if they're not interacting and paying attention to your content. So what can be done to build a community and increase engagement with your current and potential followers? Simple, always insert some personality, humor, and life into your brand and always converse directly with your followers: which is as simple as having a conversation with them, retweet them, like and comment on their posts, and directly ask them to interact with your content.

Create a Powerful Presence Across all Social Channels

If you want your audience to stay engaged, you need to be engaging. One of the great ways to do this by creating powerful social campaigns that run consistent across all your social platforms. How do you do this? Start by...

- **Telling a powerful story:** Think of ways you can use your social channels to tell powerful, motivational and therefore compelling stories to your viewers. For example, you can share a story rooted in charity work that you do or support. Alternatively, you could share stories from your happiest clients on your blog and then create a social campaign with a unique slogan and hashtag to promote and create a movement around their stories. Team this strategy with...

- **Brand your movement with a unique name and hashtags:** Branding your movement will make it memorable and stick out in the mind of your followers. Take time to brainstorm actionable ideas that will get followers involved, whether that is done by posting photos and using your hashtag to group them, running a contest, or throwing events run by your business. For example, you could use the inspirational aspect of getting fit, or New Year's resolutions, or whichever angle you believe your customers would gravitate towards. Test out a few hashtags, find the one that resonates best, and brand your movement by announcing it on your blog and social platforms.

Suck Up to Influencers

The goal is to get these influential people to like you and like your brand. Once you get in with the people that matter, your business will exponentially grow because you are exposed to their audience and authority. Make a thorough list of key industry influencers and actively take the following steps to socially connect with them:

- **Favorite, like, comment, and re-share their content:** Don't favorite/like everything they post however, that is too obvious. Try to like and favourite a few times per week and comment when you genuinely have something educational and valuable to say.
- **Tweet at them:** Whether it's asking their feedback on your content or asking industry related questions, this strategy works very well as they will be flattered that you thought of them and consider them to be a valuable resource/influencer.
- **Use the same hashtags:** This way when they're reviewing their hashtag feeds they'll see your content, and perhaps spark their interest.

Share Trending Content

Your platforms don't exist to be solely self-promotional, this strategy will only make you be seen as boring and obnoxious. Rather, you need to strike a balance between sharing promotional content that markets your brand, interacting with your followers and influencers, and sharing other useful and entertaining content and news from other valuable resources. To help you become an industry influencer and produce content that is share-worthy, follow these four tips:

- Look for viral videos on YouTube of hilarious children, adorable animals, and inspirational moments and re-share with your own unique spin.
- Scan the news for the highest covered media stories and add a unique perspective keeping relevant to your brand.
- Follow and use relevant trending hashtags to add your voice to the larger conversations happening on social media. For example on Twitter you can see "Trends."
- Use a popular tool like Buzzsumo to find content that resonates. It's the easiest way to search related industry news sites and blogs, keywords, influencers, etc. to find the content with the highest number of social shares. Study the headlines that were shared and re-share those

articles/headlines with your followers. This will continue the train of sharing, but also show your followers that your social posts are intriguing and follow-worthy.

Focus On Creating Content That People Care About and Inspires Conversation

On social media, you can't depend on passive followers to convert themselves. You need to create as many opportunities to engage people as possible, and it all begins with your content. As people spend longer on social networks, their community expands and with every person followed, page liked, or friend added, they have a whole new set of posts and stories vying for their attention. Brands who have little respect for what people want in their newsfeed will find themselves further fenced off than before, therefore it is vital that the content you share is what your prospects and former customers generally respond well too. This may be a video about how your products work, interesting insights about the culture of your company or shocking stats about inefficiency in your industry for example. Whatever the case may be, build social content that gets your prospects talking to you.

Utilise Every Opportunity to Make Social Media Content

Every piece of content that you post is part of your story that you share with your audience. Everything from your ups and downs, your proudest achievements, to your charity work and the people behind your business are all prime areas in which you can create content that you can share with your viewers. So whenever you launch a new product, attend a conference or find a new way to use one of your products for example, look at the ways in which you can squeeze content out of it for use on your social media platforms.

Promote your Platforms

Anywhere your customers interact with your brand is an opportunity to encourage them to engage with you online. Once you begin, remember to promote all your social media platforms and that includes mentioning them on your e-newsletter, your email signature, business card, product packaging and anywhere else your customers will see it. Your customers and fans need to be told where they can connect with you through social media, so make it clear where you are.

Make Providing Value a Top Priority

Social media is centred on having conversations and engaging with people. That being said, unless the aim of your platforms is to be akin to a personal journal, the content you post should not be simply an update of what you are thinking or doing with no real substance or value in what you are writing. To avoid making this mistake every post and tweet should have a clearly defined topic as well as delivering something valuable to the reader, whether that be entertainment or information. You must also write your content with your target audience in mind so rather than trying to appeal to a generic wider audience, write content that contains specialised information and analysis that those interested in

your services or in your sector would read. By openly giving out valued advice and information you will become an online repository of specialist knowledge and this will attract the attention of your target audience. Central to being effective is also realising that conversation is a two-way process so you also need to listen to what people are saying to you and about you and respond to them accordingly.

Be Active and Consistent

In order to get the most out of using social media as a marketing tool, you need to post content often. It is therefore vital that in the very beginning you figure out a comfortable writing routine that works with your editorial calendar, be it posting daily or several times a week, and stick to it in order to maintain consistency and maximise your impact. Although it takes some experimentation to find the best publishing schedule for you, there are two things that should always be considered and will dictate your posting schedule; your business goals and what your audience wants.

Respond Quickly

The fact that customer service through social media is quickly becoming an expectation of consumers means you're publicly open to both criticism and praise online. From this, it is vital that you watch for any negative things that are being said about you and respond quickly and accordingly. Rather than simply deleting any negative comments you receive, as even the most universally loved businesses receive negative comments, view them as an opportunity to win over a customer offering help, guidance or even acknowledging where something went wrong. By dealing with negativity in an open and authentic way you can help build rapport and trust with your customers. Also remember that often you will get praise online in the form of a great review or comment, do not forget to say thank you.

Coordinate Your Social Channels

Your success will be limited if you treat each social media platform as a stand-alone effort. Your networks should work together to help you achieve your goals, with your website acting as your brand's home base. Coordinate and cross-promote your social media efforts to reach new audiences, boost your following and to push people to your website where they can buy your product or service.

Boost Results With Social Advertising

If you want to accelerate your social media performance, it's worth your time to explore paid advertising options. Facebook offers a number of advertising options to help boost sales, brand exposure, audience engagement and website traffic. Twitter has two advertising solutions: promoted content that helps you cut through the noise and serve your content to tailored audiences and promoted accounts which help increase the size of your Twitter following. Likewise LinkedIn also offers opportunities to reach specific audiences by advertising or by the use of the sponsored updates feature to increase your brand's

visibility. Even if your budget is limited, don't dismiss social advertising. Used strategically it can produce great results to boost your visibility and success on social media.

Find Leads Using Social Media Monitoring Tools

Tracking and monitoring conversations happening around your brand and products is a time consuming but vital task that can be made manageable using social media monitoring tools. Ensure you actively make the effort to monitor mentions of your name, your business name, your products and any other keywords related to your business to find conversations already happening in your industry. Jump into those conversations and provide answers, guidance or helpful information where needed. Being useful is one way to start to build relationships with your target market.

Participate in Other People's Communities (OPC's)

Actively join and engage the discussions in the communities populated by people likely to use your services and share some of your expertise when it's relevant. Make it your aim to become a trusted member of these communities. You never want to be promotional in social groups, but if you're consistently helpful and engaged, prospects will likely be interested and click through to your profile where they'll find your posts and marketing collateral.

Send Regular Emails with Valuable Content, Deals and Promotions

As your social media connections move into your email list, you can and should continue to provide valuable information, notify them of upcoming deals and promotions and provide general interesting business news and updates. At this point in the funnel you have likely already become a trusted source of information, meaning your subscribers are warmed up to buying from you. Social media is all about building connections with your target market, and making yourself the first name that comes to mind when they're ready to buy. Take this opportunity to craft perfect email campaigns, using segmentation whenever possible to be sure your content and offers are targeted to specific groups of subscribers and by the strategic use of strong calls to action in your emails to make sure your subscribers know what you want them to do, and what to expect when they click on your offer/content. By continuing to cultivate them with engaging, valuable and entertaining information in your emails, you will help to build connections that will result in long-term, profitable relationships.

Create Customer Advocacy Opportunities

Customer advocacy is where your marketing ROI can take off. You'll be putting in less effort to reach your marketing goals because your customers will effectively sell for you.

- **Continue to engage qualified leads and customers**

There's no reason why people should stop learning from you after they become customers. If they're on an email list or subscribed to your blog, actively send out informational reminders for them to connect with your company on social networks.

- **Offer occasional incentives for customers to review your services or share certain posts**
Depending on your business and market, offering vouchers or bargains such as free consultations can work well. The benefits for you are twofold: You'll increase brand exposure and subtly help customers become your advocates.
- **Engage customers specifically about your products and services**
If your company offers a complex product, it might be a good idea to create a forum on your website or an entirely hub that's purely for continued customer support, just for you and your customers to interact around your products. Externally, LinkedIn showcase pages and Facebook groups might be possible hubs for product-based conversations that build increased trust for your brand and position your company as worth advocating for.
- **Provide substantial advocacy opportunities for repeat customers**
Over time, you might form mutually beneficial partnerships with repeat customers. Consider rewarding these relationships with more substantial opportunities such as inviting them to networking events.

Monitor Social for Un-Tagged Brand Mentions

Not every person who mentions your brand or products on social media will tag you in the post. In fact, many social posters may assume that you'll never even see the posts they create mentioning you. Actively scan your social media networks for these types of mentions and join the conversation by provide pleasantly surprising customer engagement. You should look to actively monitor;

Your Own Brand Terms—make sure to monitor for all variations of your company's name, including nicknames and common misspellings.

Your Own Product Terms—A less frequently used strategy involves monitoring social for some of your popular products, as well as the common nicknames and misspellings.

Create an Internal FAQ Document

Consult with everyone who manages your social pages and build a document that houses all of these questions and some solid answers. Whilst you should never simply copy-paste those responses over to your customers, you can use this document to quickly guide your response.

Do What Is Right for You

As you become a regular participant on social media platforms, you will find unique ways in which they can be used to the best advantage for your business. Nobody knows your customers and what they expect from you better than you yourself so delivering the content they want and engaging with them is the most important thing and will dictate your decisions surrounding your social media marketing

efforts. As with any other marketing efforts, you will learn in time what works and what don't, the important thing is to learn by doing.

Important Internet Usage and Social Media Statistics

Internet

- In 2017, 90% of households in Great Britain had internet access, an increase from 89% in 2016 and 57% in 2006 (ONS, 2017).
- In terms of access, 73% of adults accessed the internet "on the go" using a mobile phone or smartphone, more than double the 2011 rate of 36% (ONS, 2017).
- In terms of purchases, 77% of adults bought goods or services online, up from 53% in 2008 (ONS, 2017).
- Clothes or sports goods were purchased by 56% of adults, making these the most popular online purchase in 2017 (ONS, 2017).
- In 2017, 93% of adults who had bought online in the last 12 months, had done so from online sellers in the UK, while 31% had bought from sellers in other EU countries and 31% had bought from the rest of the world (ONS, 2017).
- On average, Google gets over 100 billion searches a month. Additionally, more than half of those searches are coming from mobile devices.

Social Media

- The power of social networking is such that, the number of worldwide users is expected to reach some 2.95 billion by 2020, around a third of Earth's entire population. An estimated 650 million of these users are expected to be from China alone and approximately a third of a million from India. The region with the highest penetration rate of social networks is North America, where around 60 percent of the population has at least one social account. As of 2016, 78 percent of the United States population had a social networking profile (Statista, 2016).
- On average, global internet users spend some 109 minutes per day surfing social networks (Statista, 2016).
- Facebook is the first social network having surpassed the 1 billion monthly active user mark and as of the first quarter of 2017, has more than 1.94 billion MAU worldwide. Shortly after its launch, relative newcomer Pinterest was the fastest independent website in history to reach more than 10 million monthly unique visitors, but still lags behind other strong players, such as photo-sharing social network Instagram or microblogging platform Tumblr (Statista, 2016).
- Recently, social networking has demonstrated a clear shift towards mobile platforms. Smartphone and tablet apps as well as mobile web access have facilitated the constant presence of mobile-first or mobile-only platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, or Snapchat. In addition they have heightened the profile of location-based services like Foursquare and enabled users to

comfortably access visual blogging sites including Tumblr and Pinterest via tablet. But the undeniable leader of mobile social networking is, once again, Facebook. As of the fourth quarter of 2016, over one billion Facebook users accessed the social network exclusively via mobile device (Statista, 2016).

FACEBOOK

Facebook is the largest and most active social network, with over two billion active users sharing more than more than 2.5 billion pieces of content per day. Businesses have utilised the benefits of Facebook, recognising that it's easy-to-use interface and extensive potential for user engagement makes it a fundamental tool in their marketing efforts. Perhaps the greatest feature of Facebook is the ability for your followers to share your content with their friends at the click of a button and is what cements Facebook as a successful word-of-mouth platform that can help your message reach an entirely new audience of prospective customers.

What's Good About Facebook?

- The user base is extensive and that means many of your customers and competitors may already be there
- It is compatible with any type of multimedia content meaning you can post videos, photos, and links to external content
- You can separate your personal and professional use

What's not so Good About Facebook?

- You have limited ability to customise your Page
- It can be difficult to get your content seen by fans
- It's a closed environment, although anyone can find your page, only Facebook users can 'Like' your business to receive your updates
- Facebook and its updates are moving closer to being a pay-only marketing platform

Which Businesses Should be on Facebook?

The sheer scale of Facebook's audience and its position as one of the most powerful social networks make it a must consider for any business.

Need to Know Facts, Stats and Tips about Facebook

- Facebook has more users than any other social network - 2.07 billion monthly active users, to be exact. That's more than a third of the entire population of the world.
- 50 million businesses use Facebook Pages.
- 22% of the world's total population uses Facebook.
- 400 new users sign up for Facebook every minute.

- Users access Facebook an average of eight times per day.
- Each day, 35 million people update their statuses on Facebook.
- The average Facebook user is separated from another given user by just 3.57 degrees of separation.
- 42% of Facebook customer service responses happen during the first 60 minutes.
- More than 100 million Facebook users belong to meaningful communities—groups aimed at helping users such as new parents.
- Thursdays and Fridays between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. are considered by many to be the best times to post on Facebook.
- Facebook Pages posts average 2.6% organic reach.
- Facebook Pages with smaller followings generally have higher reach and engagement rates.
- Brands post an average of 8 times per day on Facebook.
- 57% of consumers say social media influences their shopping, led by Facebook at 44%.
- User-generated content has been shown to generate 6.9 times the engagement of brand-generated content.
- The average click-through rate (CTR) in Facebook ads across all industries is .90%.
- 93% of social media advertisers use Facebook Ads. The next closest platform is Instagram, at 24%.
- The most effective length for an ad title on Facebook is four words—15 words for a link description.
- Images account for 75-90% of Facebook Ad performance.
- 26% of Facebook users who clicked on ads reported making a purchase.
- 83% of women and 75% of men use Facebook.
- 83% of Facebook users worldwide are under the age of 45.
- As of January 2017, men aged 18-24 make up the highest percentage of Facebook users by both age and gender, at 18%.
- Facebook is the preferred social platform of supermarket shoppers—89% use it.
- Facebook gets over 8 billion average daily video views.
- People are 1.5 times more likely to watch video daily on a smartphone than on desktop.
- One in five Facebook videos is now a live broadcast.
- Videos earn the highest engagement rate, despite making up only 3% of content.
- In Facebook News Feed, people consume a given piece of content faster on mobile than on desktop.
- 19% of time spent on mobile devices occurs on Facebook.
- Over 2.5 trillion posts have been created on Facebook.
- 42% of Facebook fans “like” a page with designs of getting a coupon or discount.

Why You Need Facebook for Your Business

Facebook has an extensive global reach, making it an invaluable platform for businesses to grow brand awareness. Almost two thirds of Facebook users decide to follow a brand page after making a purchase, making Facebook a great tool in your marketing arsenal as it encourages users to recommend and invite their own friends to ‘like’ business pages that they themselves have had rewarding experiences with. Opening your business up to a potential audience of active users that has now surpassed 1 billion.

Connect With Customers and Strengthen Relationships

You will be able to connect with your customers because it is likely that they themselves are using Facebook. When a user likes your page or comments on a post they are showing that they want a relationship with your business. This gives you an invaluable opportunity to listen to and find out about your customers, demonstrate your customer service skills, share your valuable and informative news and information, offer incentives and exclusive rewards for loyal Facebook customers. You can also use it as a channel for gaining feedback from your customers on how you can improve your product, services and your customer service, all of which can greatly help your business in the future.

Raise Awareness Through "Likes"

The Facebook 'Like' button can be seen everywhere from packaging to TV advertisements and has become a fundamental tool in the marketing efforts of businesses. Whenever a user interacts with your page by liking or sharing your content this action could get published to their friends and so forth resulting in excellent exposure for your brand and goes a long way in increasing your brand awareness. Through sharing and promoting great and valuable content that encourages interaction, you are deepening existing customer relationships at the same time as potential creating and attracting new ones, therefore making every post an invaluable opportunity to generate awareness and attention for your business.

It Shows Your Personality

The internet can often be an impersonal place; however having a business Facebook page offers an informal and chatty platform for your opinions, stories, humour and advice that gives you an opportunity to attach a face, name and personality to your brand. Having a Facebook page allows you to foster genuine social connections with your audience and as you share your brand story with others and enjoy interaction and conversation it allows others to see the human side of your business helping you create richer, more human relationships.

You Can Build a Community on Your Page

Facebook pages can work as excellent hubs for creating a community of customers, prospects and other businesses. As you continually post consistent, valuable and informative content you will be rewarded with a rich and very beneficial experience with your community in that they will share reviews, opinions, raise queries and offer feedback all of which can greatly help your business in the future. By encouraging engagement in this way you help your business build a reputation based on loyal followers making your page and brand more attractive to others who will be likely drawn to your page.

Still not convinced? Here's 8 more reasons why you need a Facebook Page

- ✓ Provides increased exposure for both your website and your brand.

- ✓ Provides website traffic by way of content sharing.
- ✓ Facilitates lead generation.
- ✓ Improves your search engine rankings.
- ✓ Free to use, though paid advertising opportunities are also available.
- ✓ Offers valuable insights into your marketplace and your competitors.
- ✓ Allows you to communicate directly with your audience.
- ✓ Allows you to create and promote company events.

Creating Your Facebook Page and Getting to Grips with The Basic Lingo

Creating a Facebook page is very straightforward. You can either go to the top navigation bar and click the arrow button to find the Create a Page option, or select Create Page from the menu on the left-hand side of your news feed. Both options lead you to a page directing you to select what type of page you want to create. Your options include the following:

- Local business or place
- Company, organization or institution
- Brand or product
- Artist, band or public figure
- Entertainment
- Cause or community

From there after you select the category that best fits your business, you will then be prompted to enter basic business information like your business type, name, address and your phone number. Once the required information has been filled out, click Get Started to continue on to page creation. This will lead to a page where you will be prompted to follow four steps:

- **About:** Here you will be asked to fill out a description and your website URL, as well as to confirm whether your business is a real establishment. You'll also be asked to type in categories that fit your business industry, separated by commas. This will help people find your page when they search for businesses in those categories.
- **Profile Picture:** Add a profile picture to your page, which you can do by uploading one from your computer or importing one from your website.
- **Add to Favourites:** This optional feature allows you to add your page to the top of the menu on the left side of your news feed for easier access.
- **Preferred Page Audience:** This lets you specify the kind of audience you want your page to have so that Facebook can make sure the right people find it. It will prompt you to enter targeted

information such as age range, gender preferences and interests. In addition, the locations where you would like your audience to be, similarly exclude locations you don't want to reach.

You can skip these steps at any time, if you'd prefer to fill them out later.

When you first create your page, Facebook will give you a pop-up tutorial of how to navigate it. It is worth reading each information box, so you can get a better idea of how to get around your page.

At the top of your page, you'll see a white navigation bar. On the left side of the bar, you'll see four options: Page, Messages, Notifications, and Publishing Tools. You'll also see an Insights option once Page Insights has been made available to you. On the right side, there are two options: Settings and Help.

- **Page** is the default destination; it shows you your business's page. This is where you can create posts, interact with fans, update your profile information and more. Messages will take you to your page's inbox, where you can see messages you've sent and received with fans.
- The **Notifications** option takes you to a page where you see your activity such as if people have liked, commented on or shared your posts, or tagged you in a post, for example. On the left-hand side, you'll also see options to check Activity where you can monitor reviews, check-ins, mentions and more and Requests, where other Facebook users can ask you for more information about your page.
- **Publishing Tools** is where you can see your previously published posts, scheduled posts and any post drafts you may have created. You can also see your expiring posts (posts that you have set to have specific expiration dates).

Clicking the **Settings** option will take you to a page where you can fill out key information about your page and change your page's settings. Note that these settings are completely separate from your personal settings.

On the left side, you'll see a menu with several options:

General: This is where you can change many of the basic settings of your Facebook page.

- You can publish or unpublish your page with the Page Visibility setting
- Choose whether you'd like other Facebook users to be able to post to your page's wall with the Visitor Posts setting
- Turn on or off News Feed Audience and Visibility For Posts, which allows you to control which specific demographics see your posts and which don't.
- Turn on or off the ability for other Facebook users to message your page privately, and if you want other users to be able to tag your photos and videos.

- Other settings include the ability to restrict your page by country and age, block specific words from appearing on your page (like inappropriate remarks in the comments)
- Turn on a profanity filter and turn comment ranking on, making top liked comments show first, instead of new ones
- You can also turn on Similar Page Suggestions, which will recommend your page to users who view pages similar to yours.
- Facebook also gives you the option to download your page's information, merge duplicate pages and to delete your page if you choose to do so.

Messaging: This option allows you to turn on Instant Replies, which allows you to send an automatic response to anyone who messages you. Here you can also tell users who message your page what your typical response time is (which you select yourself), so they know how long to expect to wait before they hear back.

Page Info: While this option still appears in the menu, it actually no longer exists — instead, Facebook will direct you to the About tab on your business's page.

Post Attribution: This is where you can decide if you would like posts made to your page to be credited to your page or to yourself. This is just a default setting and can be changed on a post-by-post basis. If you choose to post as your page, those posts will show up as posts on the page's timeline for everyone to see. If you choose to post as yourself, these posts will show up in the Posts to Page section as if you were posting on someone else's timeline.

Notifications: This section allows you to set up what kinds of notifications you'd like to receive about your page. By default, Facebook turns all notifications on, and sends you an email each time you get a notification. You can choose to turn off email notifications if you'd rather view them on your page and not have your notifications fill up your inbox. Or you can turn off notifications for specific events — like user check-ins, likes and more — if you prefer not to get a notification for everything.

Page Roles: If you have multiple employees running your Facebook page, this section is where you can add them to your page and adjust how much control you want them to have over it. There are five different roles you can assign to each person: Admin, Editor, Moderator, Advertiser and Analyst.

- **Admin** allows that person to manage and change any and all aspects of the page.
- **Editor** role gives them the power to edit the page, send messages, make posts and view insights, but not assign other users page roles.
- **Moderators** can respond to and delete comments on your page, as well as send messages as your page, view insights and create ads, but they can't create posts.

- **Advertisers** can only create ads and view insights, and Analysts can view insights.

The roles you assign to employees depend on what their jobs entail and what level of access they need in order to achieve their goals.

People and Other Pages: Here, you can see the full list of every person who has liked your page, as well as other pages that have liked your page and users you have banned from your page.

Preferred Page Audience: This option allows you to edit and update the Preferred Page Audience information you filled out when you created your page.

Apps: There are many apps available from Facebook and other developers that can help you add an extra dimension to your page. In this section Facebook will suggest apps that may be useful for your page, such as Facebook Events. You can also manage individual settings for each app that you have added by clicking Edit Settings under the app you want to change. You can also click Go to App to view it on your page, or click Link to this Tab to copy the link specifically to that section of your page for sharing purposes.

Instagram Ads: This is where you can connect your business's Instagram account if you have one so that you can run paid ads on Instagram if you choose to.

Featured: Here, you can add other pages you've liked to your page's Featured Likes section. This is a great way to show off your business partners or suggest pages that are similar to yours. You can also add/display a featured page owner, which is useful if you want your followers to know that you (or one of your employees) is the person running your page.

Page Support: If you have reported technical issues to Facebook from your page, this is where you can check the status of those reports.

Activity Log: This is where you can view all your page activity such as the things you have posted, searched for and more.

The **Help** button also pulls up a drop-down menu where you can access the Facebook Help Centre, go to the Facebook Help Community to ask a question, and send feedback to Facebook.

Personalising Your Page

Personalising your Facebook page is simple. Head to your page and click the About tab where you can fill out all of your basic business information, so customers and followers know what your business is and where to find you.

Example – Local Business

If you created your page as a local business, you'll see two options under About: Overview and Page Info. In the Overview section, you'll see basic information about your business, like your hours, price range, address, phone number and website. The Overview section will also show your business's location on a map, as long as your address is filled out. To fill out or change any of this information, go to the Page Info tab.

Under the Page Info tab, you'll be able to fill out and/or edit the following information:

- **Category:** This is the category you chose when you created your page (in this case, "local business or place"), so this will already be filled out. However, you can edit it if you made a mistake or think another category better suits your business.
- **Name:** This is your business's name. You can edit it if you made a mistake.
- **Subcategories:** As with your business category, this is the subcategory or subcategories that you filled out when you created your page.
- **Facebook Web Address:** Here, you can create a username or vanity URL for your Facebook page. When you do this, the URL to your page will be in the `www.facebook.com/YourUsernameHere` format, rather than a long collection of words, letters and numbers. That makes your page a lot easier to share, and even something that can easily fit on a business card. This is an important step in setting up your Facebook page, but make sure you're careful — once you've set your username, you can only change it one more time before it becomes permanent.
- **Address:** Here, you can add or change your business's address.
- **Start Info:** This section allows you to highlight when you started your business. Choose Born, Founded, Started, Opened, Created or Launched from the drop-down menu, and then add the date by clicking Add Year.
- **Hours:** Here, you can set your company's hours by choosing from a list of four options: "No hours available," "Always open," "Permanently closed" and "Open for selected hours."
- **Short Description:** This is where you'll enter a short description of your business (fewer than 155 characters) that will appear below your profile picture on your page.
- **Impressum:** This is where you can enter a statement of ownership on your Web presence (up to 2,000 characters), which may be required of your business by law, depending on where your business is located.
- **Long Description:** Here, you can expand on your short description by adding more details about your business, how it started, what you do and any other details you'd like your audience to know.

- **General Information:** In this section, you can also enter any other basic details you think visitors to your page should know.
- **Price Range:** Enter the price range for your products or services here, by selecting either Unspecified or one of the following options from lowest to highest: £, ££, £££ or ££££.
- **Parking:** In this section, you can check off the types of parking available to your customers from any of these three options: Street, Parking Lot or Valet.
- **Public Transit:** If there are public transit options nearby, here is where you can let visitors know how to get to your business.
- **Phone:** Here, you can add or edit your phone number.
- **Email:** Here, you can add your email address where customers can reach you.
- **Website:** You can enter or edit your company's website in this section.
- **Official Page:** This option is only necessary to fill out if your page is not run as an official representation of your brand. This is more common when creating fan pages. In most cases, you can leave this blank.
- **Facebook Page ID:** Here, you'll see your Facebook Page ID number. This information can't be changed but may be necessary to fill in when you're using other apps on Facebook.

Changing your Profile and Cover Photo

Along with updating your business's information, you'll need to upload a profile picture and a cover photo. To upload a profile picture, simply click Add Photo in the profile picture box, and then click Upload Photo. To add a cover photo, click the small camera button right above the profile picture box. You can either upload an image or choose from a photo you've already uploaded to your page.

Your profile picture will display at 160 pixels wide by 160 pixels tall on a computer and 140 pixels by 140 pixels on a smartphone, but the image you upload needs to be at least 180 pixels by 180 pixels. If you upload an image that is not square, it will be cropped to fit.

Your cover photo must be at least 399 pixels wide by 150 pixels tall, but it will display as 640 pixels wide by 360 pixels tall on a smartphone and at 851 pixels wide by 315 pixels tall on a computer. Make sure your cover image is high-quality and eye-catching, and test it out on various devices to make sure it looks good on a variety of devices.

Posting to Your Facebook Page

Posting to your Facebook page is almost exactly the same as posting on your personal profile. But instead of seeing the Status option, you'll see Post, and the Create Album and Life Event options are not there. Instead, you'll see an Event, Milestone + option, which allows you to quickly create an event to invite your followers to, or to add a company milestone. Each option will open up a pop-up box that allows you to fill out the necessary settings in order to create your event or post your milestone. You'll also see a little icon with your profile picture in the top-right corner of the post box — clicking this allows you to change from posting as your page to posting from your personal account. Otherwise, posting works the same way — you can share links, photos and videos.

Using Facebook as your Page

If you click on the arrow on the right side of the blue navigation bar at the top of the page, you'll see an option that says "Use Facebook as _____." This option allows you to switch back and forth from using Facebook as your personal account or as your page. If you are using Facebook from your personal account, there is no change to what you can do in managing your page. However, when you click on the Facebook home page, you'll see your personal news feed full of posts from your friends and the pages you have personally liked.

If you use Facebook as your page, you will instead see your page's name and profile image on the top navigation bar where your name and image usually are, and your news feed will be filled with posts from the other pages you've connected with from your business's page. You can also post to your Facebook page from the news feed in this mode.

Trending Topics on Facebook

On your news feed, you'll be able to see the top trending topics on the right-hand side of your screen. This is very useful as you can take advantage of trending topics if they're relevant to your business. For instance, if you run a bookstore, and a certain book is suddenly trending on Facebook, mentioning it in a post will allow your page to show up when users click on that particular trending topic.

Checklist for Developing a Clear and Effective Facebook Strategy

Determine Your Facebook Business Objectives

One of the first things you must do is determine what you want your Facebook Page to achieve for your business. Whether you want to use it to drive more traffic to your website, promote your events or use it as an outlet to build your brand by engaging your community, having clear objectives for your page helps optimise its reach and impact and is crucial as you later come to measure your success. So ensure you have clearly defined objectives that are realistic and achievable for your business.

Common Facebook Marketing Objectives;

- Increase Brand Exposure and Awareness
- Create a Loyal and Engaged Community
- Generate Leads
- Generate Sales

Define Your Target Audience, Are They Using Facebook?

In addition to determining your objectives, having a clear idea of your target readers and if they are themselves using Facebook is key. If you do find your target audience is active on Facebook then you can tailor your posts effectively around content that maximises interest and engagement from your readers. It is also important to consider how your demographic behaves on social media whether they are people who actively comment or can be described as lurkers, as posts can then be tailored accordingly in order to maximise your potential for impact and engagement.

Do Your Research

Conducting research before you start using Facebook for business is fundamental to a successful presence. Your Facebook research should include these several key areas;

- ***Identify your Target Audience*** - You will need to know important factors such as where they spend their time online, how they like to digest content and other general demographics.
- ***Research your Competition*** - Find out what is and isn't working for your competition on Facebook, find out what they do well and what they don't and then apply it to your own strategy.
- ***Understand the Latest Techniques*** - Make sure you are aware of the latest updates, trends and techniques on Facebook so that you can keep your page up to date, competitive and effective.
- ***Case Studies*** - Compile examples of businesses that are similar to you and have thriving Facebook pages, look at what they do well, what their audience responds well to and other important factors that you can apply to your own efforts.
- ***Facebook's Future News, Updates and Projections*** - Ensure you track Facebook's trends and updates as they regularly change so you need to keep your business up to date and effective.

Who is Going to Manage Your Page?

Whether you yourself are going to maintain your page or you are considering hiring an external consultant or agency, you need to clearly establish the person who will be running your page and ensure that they are equipped with the right knowledge and experience to know how to effectively maintain and run a page that is representative of your business and will become a valuable asset to your marketing efforts.

How are you Going to Promote Your Page?

You need to consider how you are going to promote your page and build awareness of it which involves you having to utilise all your relevant assets that you have available. Everything from your website, e-newsletter, corporate literature, blog, word of mouth to signage and business cards present an opportunity for you to advertise and promote your page. So be clear on what tools and assets you are going to use to help successfully drive traffic to your page.

Have you Got a Clear Content Strategy? How Often Will you Post?

Deciding on what major content categories you want to include regularly helps you to stay focused and maintains a clear direction for your posts to go in order to ensure your content is in line with your business goals and is targeting reader's needs. Part of this process is to also determine how often you will post on your page as having a clear schedule of when you will be posting is paramount in order to ensure it is in line with your wider social media strategy. Creating content that people will interact with takes some thought and scheduling. Your first priority should always be to create content that your audience is interested in so look to experiment to find out the most effective content strategy and share a variety of different types of posts, at different times during the day and in different quantities. Through this initial experimentation you will find out valuable information that will guide your future strategy from what content resonates best with your audience, to the times they are most active on Facebook.

What is the Corporate Character of Your Page?

Defining the corporate character of your page has a crucial part to play in how successful your Facebook strategy will be as it is here that you will outline and determine how you are going to present yourself to your audience. This consideration involves establishing a clear vision of every aspect of your page from what your brand values are and how you will get them across, what tone of voice you will present, how you will apply your branding to the creative aspects of your page right through to the type of messages that you will be sharing.

- ***Develop Your Facebook Voice*** - it is important to have an idea of what voice you want for your page that can be consistently applied across all your posts, especially if your business page is going to be managed by several different contributors. Put simply, avoid generic corporate speak and replace it with your own unique voice and customers will be more drawn to and engage with your page.
- ***Outline Creative Elements*** - Consistency should also be applied to the creative aspects of your Facebook page that is the overall presentation including the colour scheme and typography. By setting consistent guidelines over the presentation and integration of your branding into your page it ensures that all these factors support and are in line with your overall branding and help reinforce your message and brand across all social media platforms.

Posting on Your Wall: What, and How Often?

Now it's time to start posting, there are several fundamental basics to follow to ensure you create a powerful and engaging post.

With over 15 million Facebook business pages and with users sharing 2.5 billion pieces of content each day, it can be hard to make your page and posts stand out from the crowd. For small businesses without

an already established brand this is an even more difficult task to manage. There are however several guidelines available to aid you in what to post, but always remember these four key things;

Never Go For the Direct Sell

When you first start posting it may be tempting to go with the direct sale approach posting information about how wonderful your business is and all of the things you sell or offer. This however is not a successful approach and in most cases will see you viewed as a spammer and will quickly lead to people avoiding your page and not becoming fans. To avoid making this mistake you must strike a balance between subtle business posts and ones centred on customer engagement, with a favourable emphasis on the latter.

Try to Include Some Form of Media Within Your Posts

Not including some form of media content such as a relevant video or picture is a common Facebook mistake and makes posts look uninviting and will not capture a reader's attention. To avoid making this mistake make sure to post insightful and valuable content that your readers will want to read and looks visually appealing also. Posts with some form of media such as a photo or link always get more clicks so it is vital that you try to include some form of relevant media.

Say Something Interesting and Useful

Write your posts with your target audience in mind so rather than trying to appeal to a generic wider audience, provide content that contains specialised information and analysis that those interested in your services or in your sector would read. By openly giving out advice and information you will become an online repository of specialist knowledge and this will attract the attention of your target audience.

Be Creative

People always respond better to something that is new, fresh and clever so always brainstorm ideas in the mind-set of producing something that is creative and breaks the mould of other generic posts. You are competing in the fast-paced and growing industry of social media marketing so you need to make yourself stand out and give potential customers a compelling reason to choose you over your competitors.

Engagement on Facebook is reflected in five forms: likes, shares, clicks, comments and reactions. Here are several ways to create the right type of customer engagement with your posts;

The Photo Post

A picture is one of the simplest ways to catch someone's attention, as it is more visually appealing than the average post. For ideas you can provide links to photographs of your employees, offices, celebrations, etc. Similarly, posting a photo and asking fans to come up with a caption is a common and successful way of encouraging fan interaction and engagement. When it comes to brands, a familiar image is also key and can be as simple as including your business logo or a face that is tied to your brand on your images.

The Fill in the Blank Post

Fill-in-the-blank posts are great at encouraging engagement. The blanks are essentially platforms for people to share their creativity and often gather fun and short comments, which then encourage your audience to interact.

The Question Post

You will get a lot more out of Facebook if you enable and encourage your customers to respond to what you write. Beyond asking questions with your posts, you also need to remember the conversation is two-way, so respond to the comments readers leave and you are likely to develop a community on your page that can help turn your customers into fans who will promote your products and services and provide you with quality feedback.

The Tips Post

Successful posts often deliver something valuable to the reader, whether that is entertainment or information. A tip is engaging because it gives value to your audience and therefore makes them more likely to interact.

The Promotion/Discount/Incentive Post

By giving discounts or other benefits to your Facebook fans, you give them a reason to follow you and you get a captive audience for other business messaging. Common promotions offer a free gift or service upon receiving a certain number of likes. Facebook however has stringent rules when running a contest, so always consult these rules before you choose to run yours.

The Fun Post

Ensure you show your personality and inject a bit of humour into your page and posts and you will attract attention and show your brand has a personality. Strike a balance between business related posts

and fun, humoured ones as you need to remember people come to businesses on Facebook to not only be informed and educated but also to be entertained.

The On Trend Post

Utilising relevant events/ observances and occurrences that are on trend is a great way to attract attention to your page. Seek out relevant trending topics and find a way for your business to join in with and share content relating to them.

The Quote Post

Quotes are one of the easiest and most popular ways to get likes and shares on Facebook. They tend to get more interaction compared to comments because quotes are often inspirational, making it personal in nature and thus showing a more human side to your brand that people are drawn to and appreciate.

The "Behind the Scenes" Post

Sharing behind-the-scenes content helps your audience to know more about you and also works towards humanising your brand.

The "Personalised Encouragement" Post

Your fans will be thrilled if you show respect and appreciation by devoting time to interact with them. Craft a short message and give your fans words of encouragement when they announce major milestones (such as a new baby, running a marathon, getting married or purchasing a first home). You can make the message more personal if you don't use any hashtags.

The "Problem-Solving" Post

Grab your audience's attention by providing valuable content that will help improve their lives. To identify what content might be valuable to your audience, read through their profiles to discover their likes, dislikes and current influences and select a common issue that they're dealing with then create content that presents a solution to their problem and promote it. Be careful to avoid creating content that is merely disguised selling tactics however as customers will quickly notice your deception. Rather than sell to them, aim to educate your followers by posting information that they'll find valuable. This is a great way to integrate your brand into their lifestyles and build more genuine customer relationships.

The "Customer Service" Post

If you offer customer service through your company's Facebook account, it's important to respond to customer concerns in a timely manner. Helping to quickly solve their queries/complaints is a great way to provide good customer service and at the same time strengthen customer relationships. Be sure to state your customer service hours of operation in your profile as if you don't people may assume a service representative is available 24/7.

The 'Video' Post

Embedded media helps keep visitors on pages longer. Videos are a great visual tool to show your personality so be creative. For example you can post videos of employees working on a project, videos that relate to your services or products, a behind the scenes clip or something fun such as a video with you at work with your office dog.

The 'Educational' Post

Content that gets shared the most is content that has valuable information about solutions to problems. If you want to build a loyal following, provide solutions to their problems in a genuine and non-promotional way.

The 'Asking Advice' Post

Pose and problem and ask for advice. This type of Facebook post idea is great as people love to answer questions, provide their opinions and help solve problems. You can also approach it from a different angle and ask a question that may also help them with a problem, they will be grateful for the help. Some ideas include:

- What would you do if...
- I need to make a decision and am looking for your feedback....
- What advice would you offer to a person who is struggling with...?
- One of our readers has a question. Can you help?

The 'Follow Friday' Post

On a Friday, share a Follow Friday post that allows your fans to add a link to their website/business page in the comments. This is a popular post as it give your fans the chance to showcase their business or products, but they can meet new people and make new connections.

The 'Seasonal' Post

Help humanise your brand by taking advantage of upcoming seasonal trends. This can be as simple as sharing a holiday picture, quote or greeting, changing your cover photo, and providing seasonal tips relating to your product/service.

The 'Blog Excerpts' Post

Whether you have found an external blog article that your fans will find valuable or it is your own latest blog post, when you share it be sure to include a backstory or short excerpt from the post so your fans know what to expect when they click on the link.

The 'Fan-Only' Discount Post

Offer your Facebook fans an exclusive discount, just for being a fan. This goes a long way towards rewarding loyal customers and attracting new ones. Be sure to use an image to promote the discount as this will help grab the attention of your fans and help in getting more shares.

The Cross-Promotion' Post

Team up with a business that offers a complimentary product or service and help cross-promote each other. Tag each other in Facebook status posts, recommend that your fans 'like' each other's Pages, or simply share each other's content. The benefit is that you get your content opened up to a wider and potential new audience as well as creating valuable business relationships.

Although it takes some experimentation to find the best publishing schedule for you, there are two things that should always be considered and will dictate your posting schedule; your business goals and what your audience wants.

In general, posting 7+ times a week is optimal because it helps maintain good relationships with customers, attract natural search traffic, and avoids customer attrition from posting too often. This however may vary depending on what works best for your company, goals and readers so it is important to experiment to find a posting schedule that works for you. For example, if your goal is to become a cutting edge information resource, you might want to post shorter articles more often or if your main audience is mostly interested in technical or behind-the-scenes details, you'll probably publish longer

articles less often. So the first step to determining your ideal posting frequency is to find the perfect balance of what you want and what your audience wants.

To maximise the benefits of having a Facebook business page you need to ultimately ask yourself, Can you keep this schedule consistently?, Can you always publish high-quality content at this rate? And will you have enough content for this schedule? Once you've discovered the best times to post, being consistent with your publishing schedule has the benefit of expanding your reach and encourages readers to come back regularly for more.

How to Create an Effective Facebook Post - Checklist

Every post that you create must be done so with purpose and a clear goal in mind. How successful your post will be depends on two important factors before you even start writing;

- **Have I Built a Relevant Audience?**

One of the fundamental aspects of whether your Facebook posts and indeed presence is successful depends upon having built an audience that is already interested in what you have to say. A relevant and invested audience is key for your success as those fans are the ones you are trying to target with interesting and valuable content as in doing so you help turn those highly targeted users into brand advocates who genuinely care about you, will interact with you and share your content, helping you to grow your fan base. No matter what any person or article says, having 100 genuine and interested fans is far better than 5,000 fans who never interact with you, share your content or show interest in building a relationship.

- **Have I Utilised Facebook Insights So I Know What My Audience Wants and When the Best Time to Post is?**

Understanding your audience and important aspects about them from their demographics, which types of content they engage with most to the times and days they are mostly online is fundamental to an effective and well performing Facebook post. You can easily find out this information through regularly analysing your analytics, so ensure you are actively looking at this data and then apply it to the content you post. In doing so you ensure your posts are going to be as effective as possible as you have directly targeted and addressed the wants and needs of your audience and will know exactly when to post the content for maximum potential for viewers.

✓ ***Have I Included Visuals?***

Posts that contain visuals such as photos and videos get the highest amount of engagement on Facebook, so you need to actively and consistently incorporate visual elements into your posts. Photos and videos are more visible and take up more space on a user's newsfeed than a simple text based post so look to include high-quality, eye catching and relevant visuals and you will find you encourage your audience to become interactive with your page.

✓ ***Is the Post Shareable?***

Your main goal when posting something onto your Facebook page is to get your fans to act on it through engagement, sharing and participation. It is widely accepted that posts containing photos, videos and links get shared more often than simply texted based posts, but ultimately none of your posts will get shared by your audience unless they are interesting, valuable and engaging which is what makes them sharable. Before you publish your post ask yourself if you would be willing to share it yourself and if you wouldn't then you need to change it. The key characteristics of sharable posts often have one or more of the following; They are informative, humorous, buck the latest trends/ events, provide a solution to a problem, have an effective and clear call to action or contain an inspirational quote or bit of advice that fans can't help but like and share.

✓ ***Is the Post The Right Length?***

Facebook offers you a larger area for content than other social media networks such as Twitter but this does not mean you should post lengthy content. The key to getting attention with your posts is to keep the length concise and easily digestible for online readers. There is no perfect length size for a post but in general the idea is to make your posts stand out in a user's news feed so you need to grab their attention with images, good links, solid CTA'S and short, snappy sentences.

✓ ***Have I Removed Links from Link Copy?***

This tip is more driven by personal annoyance than necessity, but I recommend removing URLs from a Link Update. If you're already sharing the URL through Facebook's Link Share option, including the URL again in the copy is not only redundant, but also occupying precious update space.

✓ ***Have I Kept my Link Titles <100 Characters?***

When you're uploading a link directly to your News Feed, if the original post has a lengthy title, be sure to click into the title to edit it. Any title above 100 characters gets cut off when posted on your Facebook Business Page, and you don't want the core message to disappear as a result.

✓ ***Have I Experimented with emoticons? :)***

According to AMEX Open Forum, emoticons can impact our posts positively in a few ways:

Posts with emoticons receive a 33% higher share rate.

Posts with emoticons receive a 33% higher comment rate.

Posts with emoticons receive a 57% higher like rate.

With stats like these, it is worth testing the use of emoticons within your posts. If it works then great, if it has no impact then there is no harm done and then at least you will know for future content creation.

✓ ***Does the Post have a Clear Call to Action?***

By including a clear CTA within your posts ensures that each and every post is working as hard as it for you to get something out of it. Importantly, a CTA doesn't have to be about getting people to buy from you, it can include a wide range of other actions from encouraging people to like or share your post, commenting on it, clicking a link to directing them to a landing page or to one of your other social media platforms. What you want your readers to do is up to you just make sure you tell what to do with a clear, simple and concise CTA.

✓ ***Is the Post Relevant to My Business and Audience?***

With Facebook's continuous updates making it even harder for pages to reach their audience organically, making sure that the content they do see is highly valuable, entertaining and relevant is more important than ever. When it comes to what you post on your page you need to ensure that you stay on topic and only post relevant, high quality and varied content that your audience is interested in.

✓ ***Am I Available to Quickly Respond to Posts?***

Actively watching your posts for audience comments and interaction is just as important as the post itself. You need to be regularly available to respond to the comments you receive and then consciously act on the feedback. By responding to what others write you not only provide good customer service you publicly show your audience that you are genuinely interested in interacting with them and listening to what they have to say about you and your business. There is so much you can learn from becoming sociable with your audience and listening to them and as you become familiar with them more you can then better understand their needs, wants and opinions which you can apply to future content creation and better target their needs and interests.

Advertising Basics on Facebook

While having and maintaining an engaging page is a great marketing tool in and of itself, Facebook has a wealth of options that you can utilise if you want to boost your presence and pay to advertise on Facebook. According to Facebook for Business, there are 12 different options with each option designed for a specific outcome:

- **Page Post Engagement Ads:** These ads are intended to get more people to see and interact with (like, comment, share, etc.) your content.
- **Page Like Ads:** These ads help more people find your page so you can get more page likes.
- **Clicks to Website Ads:** These ads send visitors to your website, and you can choose a specific page of your site to advertise.
- **Website Conversions:** This option helps you track what people do on your website once they've clicked through to it from your Facebook ad.
- **App Install and Engagement Ads:** If you have an app you want to show off, this ad will help you get more people installing and engaging with your app.
- **Event Response Ads:** These ads help you create an event and get more people in attendance.
- **Offer Claim Ads:** If you want to offer a special deal or discount, you can use these ads to spread the word to new customers.
- **Video Views:** This option allows you to create and track video ads on Facebook.
- **Local Awareness Ads:** These ads allow small businesses looking to reach new customers in their area to target people by location and boost business.
- **Carousel Ads:** Carousel Ads show multiple photos or products in one ad that users scroll through and interact with.
- **Dynamic Product Ads:** These ads help you promote specific products to people who have browsed your website or mobile app.
- **Slideshow Ads:** Slideshow Ads run similarly to Facebook's video ads, but instead they're slideshows made up of photos and are designed to be more lightweight (and load more easily) on mobile devices for slower Internet connections.

Creating a Facebook Ad Campaign

1. *Choose a Campaign Objective Based on Your Goal*

The structure of a Facebook advertising campaign consists of three levels: a campaign, an ad set, and an ad. The first level, the campaign, is the basis of your ad. At the campaign level, you choose your objective, which is the action you want people to take when they see your ads. To choose the right objective simply answer the question "what's the most important outcome I want from this ad?"

The objective you select depends on your strategy. For example, if you want to run a retargeting campaign to send people from Facebook to your website, choose either the Traffic or Conversions objective, depending on what specific action you want people to take.

2. *Build Your Ideal Custom Audience*

The second stage in the campaign structure is the ad set, which specifies how your ad will run. The middle level of the Facebook campaign structure is where you choose your targeting, placement, budget, and schedule. Targeting is one of the most important elements of your campaign and it can

make or break performance, even before your campaign goes live. The easiest way to target your audience is to use the demographic and interest options. Here you'll choose demographic constraints such as location, age, gender, and language. You can set basic demographic- and interest-based targeting at the ad set level. In the Detailed Targeting section, you can narrow your audience by choosing from thousands of interests, behaviours, demographics, and more. There's no rule for how large your target audience should be. Typically, you'll get the best results with basic targeting by using a layered approach, choosing a mixture of interests and behaviours to zero in on your ideal customer.

- **Location:** This allows you to show your ads to people based on their city, country or community, and is an especially useful tool for local businesses.
- **Demographics:** Facebook gives you options to target users based on gender, age group, education level, relationship status and more.
- **Interests:** Target users with interests or hobbies that align with your brand. For example, if your business sells clothing, you can use this option to reach users who have liked similar brands' pages on Facebook.
- **Behaviours:** With this option, you can target users based on the devices they use, the things they purchase and other activities they do while connected to Facebook. This is a great tool for mobile app developers — if your app is designed for iOS devices, for example, you can narrow your audience so that only those who use iPhones see your ads.
- **Connections:** With this option, you can reach people who have connected to your business in some way on the social network, as well as their friends. For example if these users have RSVP'd to one of your events or have friends who have liked your page. This is a great way to engage people who are already somewhat familiar with your business.

3. *Build and Test Your Ad Creative*

The last stage of the campaign structure is the ad level, otherwise known as your creative. Your ad is what your audience will see. This is where you choose your ad format and creative including images, videos, news feed text, URLs and a call-to-action button. What your Facebook ad will look like depends on your advertising strategy, campaign objective, and ad format. Some objectives constrain which ad formats you can use. For example, the Video Views objective allows you to choose only video ad formats.

Top Tip: Create multiple Facebook ads and split test their performance.

The number-one best practice of Facebook ad creative is to create multiple ads as you run your campaigns. Don't just stop after you've created a single ad, by creating multiple ads to test variations in copy, image used, and even overall ad format, you can improve performance over the life of your campaign and find out what formats resonate best with your audience.

How to Build More Members of Your Facebook Group

Groups for Pages, enables the 70 million+ Pages on Facebook to create their own unique communities and feeds. More than 1 billion people around the world use Groups and more than 100 million people see Groups as the most important part of their experience on Facebook. Facebook Groups are the place to connect with other like-minded people and are becoming increasingly important for brands and businesses aiming to cultivate a community.

Whether you choose to have just a Facebook Page, Group or Both in your Facebook marketing mix, Here's a quick overview of the positive features for each:

Facebook Page

- Built-in analytics (Page Insights).
- Call-to-action button (e.g. Sign Up, Book Now, Learn More) on your Facebook Page.
- Boost your Facebook Page and Page posts with Facebook ads.
- Like and comment as your Facebook Page.
- Add apps and services to your Facebook Page, so that your fans can easily order a product, make a booking, get a quote and more.

Facebook Group

- Built-in analytics (Group Insights) now.
- Set your Facebook group as private (Closed or Secret).
- Post documents, create polls, and even buy and sell in your Facebook group.
- Group chat with your group members.
- Members receive notifications about new posts to the Group.

10 Things you Can Use Your Facebook Group For:

- Building Relationships
- Growing a Community
- Establishing Yourself as an Expert
- Share your Blog Posts
- Drive Traffic to your Website
- Grow Your Subscriber / Email List
- Launch New Products and Sell Existing Ones
- Host Trainings
- Find Partners

Tips For Growing your Group

- **Engage With Your Members Regularly**
When your community is in its initial small stage, there might not be many posts from your community members. Help cultivate conversation by regularly (perhaps 2/3 times a week)

adding relevant, helpful conversations to encourage engagement. For example, you could welcome your new members every Monday, initiate a discussion on every Wednesday, and invite members to share their weeks' achievements on Friday.

- **Use Analytics to Inform Your Strategy**

Group Insights can be accessed by clicking on "Group Insights" on the left sidebar. Here, you can find out insights such as how your Facebook Group is growing, when your members are most engaged, and who your most engaged members are. Use these metrics and insights to inform your community-building strategy.

- **Host Regular Events**

Hosting events is a great way to get community members involved and attract inactive members back to the community. In-person meetups help to reinforce the connections made online, making the relationships more meaningful. Here are some online and offline events you could host:

- AMAs (Ask-Me-Anything) with a community member or industry expert
- Q&As with someone from your company
- Talks and panel discussions
- Mastermind sessions or community discussions
- Casual get-to-know-each-other gatherings such as brunch, picnic, dinner, etc.

Once you have planned your event, create an event in your Facebook Group and invite members to attend.

- **Email Your List and Invite them to Join**

If people subscribe to your email list, send them a welcome email with a link to join your group!

- **Write a Blog Post Promoting Your Facebook Group**

This is a great way to get in front of a new audience and attract more people to your group. You can use this piece of content and promote it on Pinterest, Instagram, and Facebook to expand your reach.

- **Leverage Your Friends and Group Members**

Encourage your members to invite their friends in your post, group description and per private message directly when inviting them to your group. You may also encourage your group members to help you and reward those who put in the most effort.

- **Advertise Your Group**

Remember to promote the link to your group on other social media sites like Twitter or in YouTube videos etc, wherever you can. You should also look to post the link to your group in similar groups and invite members directly to join your group via private message. Don't be spammy with this technique though, simply 'like' other members posts and write them a private

message, asking them to join your group so you can create new relationships at the same time and they will more likely have a look at your post in your own group.

Top Tip: Get rid of Spammers. Admonish or delete spammers to keep your group clean and on topic. Decide who you are going to accept in your group and check out their profiles if necessary.

- **Make Sure you Respond to Every Post in Your Group**

You want to reward people for posting high quality content into your group, so reward them by commenting and letting them know how much you like what they're posting. Think positive reinforcement.

- **Give Your Group What They Want**

You'll be surprised at how being of service will build your client base, no matter what your business is. Ask people what their needs, wants and desires are, and structure your posts around that. The more you can fill a need, the better.

How to Build a Following and Amplify Your Impact

Make Yourself Likeable

If you want to be liked on Facebook you need to make yourself likeable first. This means you need to incentivise and attract people to your page by having an active page full of quality and consistent posts with good, valuable information and consistent engagement and interaction between your page and others.

Promote your Facebook Page on Other Social Media

Anywhere your customers interact with your brand is an opportunity to encourage them to follow you on Facebook. Once you develop your presence, remember to promote it across all your other social media platforms sharing your URL in your profile descriptions as well as sharing your most recent posts as well as mentioning it on your e-newsletter, your email signature, business card, product packaging and anywhere else your customers will see it. This also applies if you're an active participant in a forum or membership site, placing a signature with your fan page link will direct more attention to your page.

Use Tagging and Acknowledgments

Tagging an author, influencer or a popular Facebook page in your post is a great networking tool that can drive new connections. You should however have a good reason to do this, for example if the page or author has posted something that will be useful and valuable to your fans. Be authentic and selfless in how you do it and you may be rewarded with increased attention to your page.

Reward Your Loyal Supporters

Encourage your loyal customers to join your Facebook page as supporters, and reward them with special deals for consistent support. This equally applies to those already fans of your page that continually show their support. A recommendation or shout-out from a happy customer is a lot more attractive than a marketing slogan, so reward your fans and they will likely share with their friends how great you are.

Host Contests

Contests are a popular method of building an audience on Facebook and, if executed correctly, can drive huge fan growth over a short period of time which will have a big impact on your Facebook page. You should test a wide variety of different types of contests and see which resonates with your audience but always remember that you need your contest to captivate attention in a way that gets people thinking about your products or services, but make it simple enough that the majority on people can easily take part in.

Popular Contest Ideas

- Tell Us How You Would Use [Product] to Win it!
- Help Name our New [Product]
- Caption This to Win [Prize]!
- Friday Giveaway! Simply post _____ in the comments to be in with a chance to win!

Connect With Other Page Managers

Connecting and interacting with other page managers, especially local business to you can be a powerful tactic for making new connections and gathering attention. If there is a local business to you on Facebook then look to connect and work with each other to cross-promote. Not only will you develop a meaningful connection with another business that can lead to future opportunities, you will become visible to their audience which can help drive new likes and connections.

Join Conversations and Comment on Other Pages

One of the easiest ways to gain more exposure to your Facebook page is to utilise the social side of the network and interact with and join conversations of others to make yourself more visible. By actively searching for relevant businesses and conversations to interact with and join you can demonstrate your authority and authenticity by adding your relevant and valuable thoughts to conversations which will ultimately get yourself noticed by others who will likely be drawn to your page.

Utilise Print Media

Every piece of print media you use in your business from brochures to signage, business cards, magazine ads and vehicle stickers presents an opportunity for you to clearly display that you are on Facebook. Make yourself visible and you make it easier for the people you have connected with in person and who have seen other forms of your corporate literature to know you have a presence and connect with your Page.

Use Facebook Advertising

Facebook offers several paid options for you to advertise your business. From Facebook ads to sponsored stories and promoted posts, there are many customisable options for you to utilise allowing you to have the freedom to create an ad campaign that works for your business.

Give Your Fans a Reason to Connect

To make people want to connect with you, you have to give them a reason to do so. This means in addition to consistently providing quality content you need to utilise other means of incentivising people to connect with you from hosting regular competitions or giveaways to holding a fan of the week showcase, there are many options available for you to encourage people to like you. Simply learn what your target audience wants, why they like you and what content they respond well to and you will easily be able to use this information to attract more people to connect with you.

Turn Your Facebook Page Into a Community

Turning your page in to a community hub where fans are free to interact and share their opinions is a great way to learn more about your community and help build your brand. By actively getting your fans involved in your page by asking things about them and encouraging them to interact with each other, you utilise the fundamental aspect of why they are on social media, they just want to be heard. Therefore build your strategy around encouraging others to use your Facebook presence as a platform for sharing, and you will reap rewards for your business.

Be Social With Your Fans

Make it a habit to check your page daily for any new interactions or conversations you can join in with and respond to. It is by taking the time to respond to those who are talking to you that you show that you are genuinely interested in what they are talking about online and you have real conversations that build relationships. From this follows the development of a community of loyal followers that are likely to recommend you to others and share and interact with your content, allowing it to be shared and seen across whole new audiences.

Add a Facebook Like Button or Box to Your Website

Adding a Like Box to your website and blog is a great tool to utilise and it can be a big generator for likes and traffic to your page. You can place the button wherever you like on your website—perhaps in the sidebar, header or footer. You can also add the Facebook Like button to thank-you pages that appear after someone signs up for your mailing list, submits a lead form or makes a purchase. Since those visitors have already connected with your business, they will likely connect with you on Facebook as well.

Include Your Facebook Page in Guest Author Bios

When filling out your author bio or profile on a website where you contribute content, look for a place to add your Facebook page link. If there's more than one field to enter a link to your Facebook page, enter it multiple times. Some sites use plugins that will only pull from one field or another.

Connect Profiles With Pages

One very simple and effective tactic you and every employee can do to promote your Facebook page is to add your business as your current employer in your personal profile's Work section. There are many benefits to this tactic, at a basic useful level it ensures that there's a link to your Facebook page everywhere your profile appears on Facebook. An additional benefit is that when you leave a comment on a website and/or participate in industry-related Facebook groups and comment on industry blogs that use the Facebook comment platform, your page is linked within that comment as well. When you connect your page and profile you'll build a lot of exposure for your Facebook page that could lead to more fans.

Adding the link is simple. Go to your personal About page and edit your Work and Education information. Click Add a Workplace and select your Facebook page as the company. After you enter details about your position, check the "I currently work here" box and choose the dates as applicable. Make sure the visibility is set to Public and click Save Changes.

Interact as Your Page

Most users interact on Facebook as themselves (using their personal profile), but if you're looking to grow your page's audience, consider using Facebook as your page to garner more attention. Once you've chosen to use Facebook as your page, you can go to other related pages in your industry and comment on those pages' posts as your page. This way, you're bringing attention to your page, not your personal profile.

Create Facebook Groups

Facebook Groups make it easy to connect with specific sets of people, like family, teammates or co-workers. Groups are dedicated spaces where you can share updates, photos or documents and message

other group members. With the idea behind Facebook groups being that even with a small group, you can start to build a community of like-minded people.

- ✓ **An easy way to get into people's inboxes:** By default people get emails any time there is a new wall post. That means that when you have a new product or something that important to say everyone that's in the group will get it via email.
- ✓ **A free way to create a paid member-only group:** Now, you can't do all of the payment through Facebook, but you can very easily make a PayPal buy button to take payment and then you manually give the person who bought access within 24 hours.
- ✓ **Sell Products:** A great alternative/addition to selling products or digital goods on your website, you're now able to sell in Facebook groups. Once you create a For Sale group, you'll see an option to "sell something" in your Facebook update.
- ✓ **Establish Expertise:** One of the easiest ways to use Facebook groups for business is to become a resource in your field. Create a group or contribute your knowledge to one that already exists.

***Pro Tip:** If you set up a group for your business, create guidelines for the group and put them in the description area and/or pin them to the top of the group feed. You'll need to moderate the group to ensure that members are adhering to the guidelines and not spamming everyone else with their own agenda.*

Curate Content for Similar pages to Get Noticed by Their Fans

Simply send each of your targeted Facebook pages a message offering to curate content for them once a week or even just once or twice a month. It is worth noting however that the more exposure, the quicker the results. The pages you approach should appreciate the opportunity to mix up their content not to mention that it takes some of the pressure off from posting. Be sure to remember that the pages you reach out to need to be complementary, not competition. Chances are anyway that any direct competitors likely won't allow you to use their Facebook page to promote yourself.

Seek Out Promotional Swaps

Search for and list Facebook pages for products, services or communities that are complementary to yours. Once you have a robust list, craft each page a message, explaining a bit about yourself and your Facebook status and stats such as page likes and engagement. Offer to mention their Facebook page to your fans on a Facebook update if they mention yours in return. Once you reach an agreement, share your cross-promotional posts. Remember to track your results so you know which partners are good to work with in the future.

Note: This tactic works best when you have a good start with 3,000 to 4,000 likes on your Facebook page. If your page is light on fans, you may want to reach out to your email list or consider doing an inexpensive Facebook advertising campaign to increase your fan base.

Tips for Success

- ***Optimise Your Profile***

Facebook is continually working and updating its features for businesses to help them create the best experience for your audience when they are on your page. It is up to as the business page owner therefore to utilise the many features Facebook has to offer to make your page as competitive and effective as it can be.

- ***Featured Video***

The use and popularity of video has grown exponentially throughout the past few years and as such Facebook has revamped its video sharing tools to accommodate this growing trend. One of the great features you can now utilise is the ability to upload and select a featured video for your Facebook Page. The video will occupy a prominent position on your page, highlighted under the video section of your Page in addition to being visible on the left side of your Facebook Timeline. Videos are a popular and powerful way to share your story in an engaging way so ensure that the video you choose to represent your page is high quality, engaging and informative.

- ***Use Photos***

Using visual content such as photos within your posts is continually shown in studies to get the highest amount of engagement on Facebook. As such, they present a huge opportunity for brands to connect with fans and generate more likes, comments and shares. Photos and videos are more visible and take up more space on a user's newsfeed than a simple text based post giving you the opportunity to showcase your business in a way that text alone cannot. So it is vital you regularly and consistency include high-quality, eye catching and relevant visuals.

- ***Create a Unique Facebook Web Address***

Facebook offers you the invaluable opportunity to change your Facebook URL and personalise it for your business. The URL is what people will enter to find your Facebook page and it follows the format of <http://facebook.com/username>. It is vital therefore that you choose a clear username that is reflective of your business as URLs are heavily weighted by search engines.

- ***Keyword-Rich "About" Section*** – Ensure that when you fill in your About section on your page that you not only consider making it clear, fully filled, accurate and concise but also look to utilise the SEO benefits by filling it with keyword rich information. Your About section, Mission and Company Description are all searchable on Facebook and other search engines, so it is vital that they are as optimised as they can be.

- ***Build Out Your About***

- Make sure all of your important details are placed front and centre. You have a short amount of time to gain the attention of potential fans so put the most relevant details at the top of your "About."
- Make your about stand out with rich content. Include links to webinars, videos, upcoming events you're hosting, and in-depth information about you, your product and/or service.

- Add your mission, vision and values along with any founding details that would matter to potential clients.
 - Add keywords and phrases that are relevant to your business and would be searched by any consumer looking for your small business.
 - Provide success stories and examples of how you've helped others. Was there a difficult situation you were able to work through? Highlight that story.
 - Remove jargon from your content and talk to fans in a conversational way.
- **Relevant, Up-To-Date Contact Information** – When someone is looking on your page it is vital that you make yourself easily contactable. Ensure that all the contact information you have on your page, from your email address to your phone number and location is all up-to-date.
 - **Call-to-Action Button** - The Call-to-Action button is a great feature that you can add to further utilise your Facebook page. With this new feature, admins can choose from a selection of call-to-action buttons such as Book Now, Contact Us, Use App, Play Game, Shop Now, Sign Up and Watch Video that will be added next to the "Like" button at the top of your Facebook Page. An added benefit is that admins can edit the call-to-action button to link to a page on or external to Facebook.

Never Stop Listening to Your Audience

Listening to your customers is a fundamental aspect of having a successful social media presence. The essence of social media is based upon creating conversations, engaging your audience and listening to them showing you have a genuine interest in what they have to say about you and your business. You can then take what you learn from listening and use that information to help better many aspects of your business in the future from your products and services, to your content and future marketing campaigns. Ultimately by listening to what others say about you are armed with the valuable knowledge to know what your customers really want and need which will help your business to successfully grow.

Humanise Your Brand

The most successful companies on Facebook are those that show the real people behind the brand. Facebook offers an informal and chatty platform for your opinions, stories, humour and advice that gives your business a human face and it is through this great ability to humanise your business through the content you post that ultimately makes your business appear more engaging, relatable and trustworthy to others. Ensure you utilise this opportunity for your customers to get to know the real you better, so whether you are sharing industry expertise, reviewing a product or sharing an aspect of your brand story, each post gives your customers helping them to better understand who you are, what you do, and ultimately tells them why they should care about you.

Be Consistent With Calls to Action

By ensuring you include a clear call to action in every post, you make each post purposeful for your business. Whether you direct the reader to an external blog post or ask them to leave a comment for example you need to consistently encourage the reader to continue the interaction with you either on Facebook or externally on one of your other sites.

Be Prepared to Adjust if Things Aren't Working

A key aspect of maintaining a successful social media marketing strategy is to continually look to see what is and isn't working and how you can improve your Facebook marketing. This involves initially setting realistic objectives for your presence in the beginning and continually analysing your analytics to ensure you are meeting them. If you find you are not getting what you want from your Facebook presence then you know you need to adjust some aspects of your strategy. It is through this adjustment that you can learn and grow as a business online which will ensure you are presenting yourself as effectively as you can online and creating better experiences for your audience.

Stay up to Date with Facebook's News and Developments

As Facebook evolves it is likely to make important changes that you as a business need to be aware of. Remember to follow the official Facebook business page and subscribe to their blog to make sure you are aware and up to date with Facebook's business updates.

Optimise the Cover Photo

Your page's cover photo represents one of the most important parts of your page. When someone visits your page, the cover image is most likely going to be the first thing a visitor will see and as such presents an opportunity to showcase your products and services, show your personality, and attract attention with eye catching and relevant photos that utilise holidays, seasons and other special events etc. all of which help towards lead generation for your business. Ensure you utilise the cover photo by creating an eye catching, good quality image with a strong CTA. Ultimately, design your cover photo with a clear primary purpose of gathering attention and prospects.

Utilise Major Events, Trends and Holidays

Major events, trends and national holidays present great opportunities for you to utilise to generate more attention for your page. From running a special competition, updating your cover photo to reflect the holiday season, to running a special promotion to coincide with a big event, there are many ways in which you can utilise these major occurrences to encourage fan engagement. Ensure you are organised and plan ahead so make a list of major events and holidays and start thinking of ways in which you be inspired to get your business involved.

Always Make Giving Good Customer Service a Priority

Giving good customer service is essential for any brand on Facebook. You need to accept the social aspect of social media and take the time to respond and interact with those who are talking to you. Answering questions and queries and responding to complaints and issues are a natural part of any business so you need to show your fans that you are listening and care about what they have to say by responding quickly and genuinely to them. In doing so you not only boost engagement, you show your audience that you are human and that you care about what they have to say.

Let People Post Content on Your Facebook Page

There is the option on Facebook pages to not allow others to comment on your page. However whilst it is available, it doesn't mean you should use it. In fact, not allowing people to post content on your page is a mistake as you stop the ability for people to interact with you. Whilst it opens you up to the potential of public complaints and negativity, it also opens up genuinely interested audience who wants to interact with you, hear your story and share your content.

Learn From your Audience Insights

By regularly exploring your analytics, you have the ability to understand your audience from what they engage with best, what content they like most, when they are online and many other important factors that help you optimise your content strategy, target your advertising better and generate more return on investment.

Enable the Follow Button

The Follow button allows anyone to follow your public updates. If fans want to follow you, they just have to visit your profile and click the Follow button. When someone sends you a friend request, they'll automatically follow your public updates even if you haven't accepted their request. Facebook has a limit of 5,000 friends, but you can have unlimited followers,

Turn on the Follow button to allow more people to connect with you.

- Click the down arrow in the upper-right corner and select Settings.
- Click Followers on the left sidebar.
- Select Everybody from the Who Can Follow Me section (the default is Friends).

Pro Tip: *Since anyone who follows you can see your public updates, be sure to change your audience settings as needed to control privacy. You can choose which updates are public and which ones are only for your friends or a custom list of friends.*

Share Page Posts Via Your Profile

Personal profiles are getting much more visibility in the news feed than pages. If you have some key page posts that you would like to garner more reach, share them via your personal profile. The benefit of this is that the page name travels with the post and gives your page a boost in reach, introducing your friends and followers to your page, resulting in more fans.

Craft Multi-Product Ads

Facebook now offers the ability to create multi-product (also known as carousel) ads, which allow you to rotate several products in one ad. Each product has its own title, image and landing page but all share the same text and social (like, comment and share) buttons. It's an excellent way to test which product gets the best response. While you're able to add two or more images to the multi-product ads, the best practice is to test to find out what number of displayed products maximizes your conversion rate.

There are a few things to bear in mind when creating a multi-product ad.

- ✓ Keep the headline and description text short so they'll fit the screen. For best results, limit your headline to 25 characters and your link description to 30.
- ✓ As per other ads on Facebook, you can't have more than 20% text in the image. You can measure the ratio using the Facebook Grid Tool.
- ✓ Remember, multi-product ads (both for desktop and mobile ads), work on a square dimension of 600 x 600 pixels so don't use large, wide images.
- ✓ Multi-product ads only run on the news feed and are not allowed in the right column of Facebook.

Add Featured Videos

Facebook is pushing for more video content and has hit 1 billion video views per day in September 2015. Whilst Facebook is already encouraging pages to post videos directly to the platform, one of Facebook's latest updates is encouraging pages to upload a featured video and show it prominently to people when they visit your Video tab. Setting up a featured video is easy, simply click Videos in the tab below your page's cover photo. Upload your chosen video if you haven't already done so then click Add Featured Video. Featured videos effectively bring attention to your page.

Create Video Playlists

Relating to above, Facebook has also created video playlists, which should engage users to watch and share more content. To set up your video playlist simply click Videos in the tab below your page's cover photo (which you may find in the More section). Then select Create Playlist. Create a video playlist for your content then add a title and description and click Next. Select the videos you want to add to your playlist and click Next. Now, click and drag videos to order them and select Create Playlist. Your video tab will now display one section with your playlists and one section for all videos. This is an excellent way to group and share themed or topical video content.

Explore Dynamic Product Ads

Facebook dynamic product ads allow you to reach customers with relevant products and offers by automatically showing them ads for the products they're interested in. According to Facebook themselves this new feature is beneficial to businesses as it means you can;

- ✓ **Scale:** Promote all of your products with unique creative without having to configure each individual advert
- ✓ **Always on:** Set up your campaigns once and continually reach people with the right product at the right time
- ✓ **Cross-device:** Reach people with adverts on any device they use, regardless of their original touchpoint for your business
- ✓ **Highly relevant:** Show people adverts for products that they are interested in, in order to increase their likelihood to purchase

Collect Testimonials and Reviews

If you set up your Facebook page as a local business, you have the option to collect testimonials and reviews from your customers. Whilst you can't encourage customers to review your business for incentives, you can help yourself by letting your customers know (by putting up signs at your shop or on your corporate literature for example) that they can review your business on your Facebook page. In addition to having a Facebook page full of reviews, you can then as an added bonus put the best reviews on your website. To add a review, click on the timestamp of the review, click the drop-down arrow at the top right and select the Embed Post option.

Ask for Audience Feedback

A survey not only encourages your audience to engage with your page, it also helps you discover important information about what your customers want from you and your page. You can, for free, poll your audience with a standard post to your page or use Facebook polling apps. Your choice depends on if you want to compile the answers yourself or have the app compile the answers for you, and if you want to collect additional information (such as email addresses) that you can't collect publicly on your page.

Encourage Your Fans to Use the See First Option

Facebook now allows people to customise their news feed to prioritize updates from particular friends, groups and pages. This is great news for business pages with good content, as you can have your fans prioritise your posts. Educate your audience on how to select to see your posts first in their news feed. The easiest way is to go directly to your Facebook page, click the Liked button and then select the See First option.

Get a Facebook Beacon for Your Local Business

The Facebook Beacon is a free and excellent device that boosts the visibility of your local business to nearby mobile users. All you need to do is request one from Facebook for your local page. You put the device in your local business and it sends information to people who are on Facebook near you and have Bluetooth turned on. It can be used to send anything from a welcome message with a photo, recommendations from their friends who have visited the store, a prompt to check in and much more.

Create Saved Replies for Your Page

Saved Replies can save precious time if you have a standard message you frequently send. You are able to create generic replies for all of your frequently asked questions, then customise them before sending them out. To access your saved replies, first navigate to the Messages area of your page. To see Saved Replies, click on a particular message. The message will appear in a pop-up box and the Saved Replies will be on the left sidebar. From there, select Manage Replies to see all of the replies you've created or create a new reply.

Use the Call to Action Button

The call to action button is designed to bring a business's most important objective to the forefront of its Facebook presence. These buttons link to any destination on or off Facebook that aligns with a business's goals. You have multiple options with an unlimited amount of ways you can use them. The seven calls to action available are:

- Book Now
- Contact Us
- Use App
- Play Game
- Shop Now
- Sign Up
- Watch Video

Use Testimonials

Testimonials sharing real-life experience with your business go a long way in building credibility and can add a boost to your product sales. To encourage people to do this you need to get them excited about sharing their thoughts on your page.

Create a Posting Road Map

Many businesses start posting on Facebook without a content posting plan. As a result, their posts are often inconsistent and don't address the needs of their audience. A great tip is to create a road map for your posts covering various core topics. The more topics you add to your content bucket, the more variety you can offer to your audience. After you choose the topics you'll cover, go on to create a

calendar that maps out what to post each day. If Start by creating a content calendar for one week in advance as a good rule of thumb.

Write Your Text for Skim Readers

A study by the National Centre for Biotechnology Information showed that people have an attention span of 8 seconds, which is 1 second less than that of a goldfish. If you apply that to Facebook, the first three to four words of your update are crucial to grabbing your audience's attention. Make it your priority to create compelling content in your Facebook updates.

Consider Using Brand Hashtags

Whilst the benefits of using Hashtags on Facebook are widely contested, I wouldn't dismiss the idea of hashtags altogether, before you have tested them for yourself. Using hashtags on Facebook can make sense if they are used correctly and contribute to your brand positioning. Is there a particular hashtag you use for your branding? Use hashtags when they make sense for your business. It is also effective and worthwhile to use Hashtags if you're posting about a trending topic.

Customize Your Facebook Post Descriptions

When you post a link on Facebook, it fetches the metadata automatically. Did you know, this can and should be edited to fit the post description and suit the current context? If you're republishing a post, tweak the metadata and add your own keywords. A great tip is to remember that Facebook posts are now searchable, so this is an excellent opportunity to add your keywords to the description too.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Posting Only About Yourself

The essence of social media marketing is about creating social engagement. Therefore you need to encourage interaction from your fans by sharing valuable and informative information and comments and listening to and joining in with conversations. It is vital that you do not simply use Facebook as an outlet to push your hard sales and promotional content. Whilst you have a presence as you will ultimately want to drive sales, your posts should not blatantly reflect this, rather you need to make people love your brand by sharing stories, responding to interactions and sharing information they are going to find useful and interesting.

Posting Unrelated Content

It is important that you do not treat your Facebook business page like your own personal page. Those that have chosen to like your page expect to get relevant, valuable and informative information regarding your business or industry therefore you need to create a content strategy that clearly shows the themes and topics you will be sharing and will ensure that every post has a relevant purpose and ensuring it is branded and directly written with your target audience in mind.

Not Responding to Negativity

Rather than simply deleting any negative comments you receive, as even the most universally loved businesses receive negative comments, view them as an opportunity to win over a customer offering help, guidance or even acknowledging where something went wrong. By dealing with negativity in an open and authentic way you can help build rapport and trust with your customers.

Begging For or Buying Likes

The more people that like you results in the more potential reach you have for your content as people interact with, like and share it. This leads many businesses to beg for likes or buy them from external sources rather than earning them through posting engaging content, interacting with others and giving incentives to encourage people to like you. Buying likes will bring no benefit to your business as whilst you may appear popular initially, those bought 'likes' are not going to be from real people that want to interact with you, so therefore you will lose out on important engagement and potential business opportunities. Begging for likes also reflects badly on your businesses reputation online as it makes you appear untrustworthy and desperate.

Connecting Your Facebook and Twitter Account

Connecting your Facebook and Twitter feeds is not recommended as each platform requires a tailored use of content from the general layout of content to the best time to post, therefore you need to treat your Facebook and Twitter account as separate entities and share your content individually tailoring them to each as opposed to having Twitter automatically tweet the same message you posted on Facebook.

Not Using Facebook Insights

If you fail to analyse your Facebook analytics you are missing out on the opportunity to gain valuable insight as to whether your page is successful and is reaching your business objectives. It also helps you to determining which types of posts are most successful and which aren't, which will help guide future content creation and ensure you make informed decisions that will ensure your pages future impact and effectiveness.

Not Checking for Bad Links and Grammar & Spelling Errors

You must remember that you represent your business with every post therefore it is vital that you review your content carefully before you share it. If you have included a link to an external site check that it is working and points to the correct page in addition to double checking your grammar, spelling and ensuring your post is clear and concise before you post it as a post that is grammatically incorrect, incoherent or riddled with spelling mistakes will affect your credibility and reputation negatively.

Trying to Write Every Post for Everyone

Remember when writing your posts you need to do so with your target audience in mind as this will ensure that your content is focused, interesting and informative to those who are interested in you and your industry. Writing to please a generic mass of people will not help your cause to become a source of valued information and expertise in your industry, so always consciously aim to directly target and address the needs and wants of your audience within your posts.

Measuring Success

Like any other marketing strategy, the success of your business Facebook page must be measured against your business objectives. Analysing your Facebook Insights will show you a wealth of information and help determine whether your page is having a measurable impact and whether the data is reflective of the overall goals of your business page.

Likes

In the Likes section of your Insights, you'll find 3 core metrics:

- **Page Likes:** The total Page likes for each day, over a 28-day period
- **Net Likes:** The number of new likes minus the number of unlikes
- **Where Your Page Likes Happened:** The number of times your Page was liked, broken down by where it happened.

If you're looking to build brand awareness, monitor your Page likes and ensure that you're connecting with more of the people who matter to you by targeting your posts.

Top Tips:

- You can select longer periods of time to see your metrics by using the chart at the top of the Page
- Click on a metric in the benchmark box on the right to compare data over time.

Reach

In the Reach section of your Insights, you'll find 4 core metrics:

- **Post Reach:** The number of people your post was served to, broken down by paid and organic reach
- **Likes, comments and shares:** The positive engagement that helps you reach more people
- **Hide, Report as Spam and Unlikes:** Negative engagement will decrease the number of people you reach
- **Total Reach:** The number of people who were served any activity from your Page

Top Tip: Click or drag the Post Reach, Positive Engagement and Negative Engagement charts, and the pop-up will tell you which posts people were seeing during the selected time period. This helps you tie content to performance trends in your graph.

Visits

In the Visits section of your Insights, you'll find 2 core metrics:

- **Page and Tab Visits:** The number of times each of your Page tabs was viewed
- **External Referrers:** The number of times people came to your Page from a website outside of Facebook

Top Tips: Ensure that your Page is filled in with basic information so that you can be found by the people who matter most to you.

Update your Page with:

- **Category and description:** Add accurate details to help people find your Page when they search
- **Website and phone number:** Enter relevant business info so that people can find you online
- **Page web address:** You can request a web address like facebook.com/marketing, which makes it easy to find you. Update your Page web address here.

Posts

In The Posts tab section of your Insights, you'll find 3 core metrics:

- **When Your Fans Are Online:** Shows you when the people who like your Page are on Facebook content
- **Post Type:** Displays the success of different post types based on average reach and engagement
- **Top Posts From Pages You Watch:** Gives you the engagement of posts from the Pages you're watching

Top Tip: Review your analytics regularly and schedule your posts to appear when your audience is most often online. You can also review your post types to see what resonates most with your audience, such as link posts or photo posts.

Video

In the Visits section of your Insights, you'll find 3 core metrics:

- **Video Views:** Number of times your Page's videos were viewed for 3 seconds or more
- **30-second Views:** Number of times your Page's videos were viewed for 30 seconds or more. If a video is less than 30 seconds long, this counts when people view 97 per cent of it.
- **Top Videos:** Most-viewed videos on your Page watched for 3 seconds or more.

People

The People tab is divided into Your Fans, People Reached and People Engaged.

- **Your Fans:** View the gender, age, location and language of the people who like your Page
- **People Reached:** See the people your post was served to in the past 28 days
- **People Engaged:** Find out who has liked, commented on or shared your posts, or engaged with your Page, in the past 28 days. Once you know who your most engaged audience is, you can better tailor your Boosted Posts to them.

Top Tip: Target your Boosted Posts to your most engaged audience to keep them interested.

Audience Engagement

Is your audience interacting with your content? This could be by: liking, commenting, reacting or sharing it. Engagement is about gauging how much people interact with you and the comments, shares and likes on your Page are a good way to measure engagement. Your aim should be to create conversation and if your readers are interacting with and responding to your posts then it is a good indication that you are engaging your readers making them more likely to respond and continue interacting with your page.

In terms of importance, you need to consider: A comment is more valuable than a like and a share is more valuable than a comment. When someone likes or comments on your content, it is not automatically shared with their followers. Facebook does take into account the popularity of your content, so it's more likely to be shared to other people if there are likes or comments. But shares are really what you want. With a share, it is a real endorsement of your content and your fan is specifically asking Facebook to share your content with their friends.

Negative Feedback

Tracking negative feedback is also an important part of the process as it can show you areas for concern. If fans are hiding your posts, un-liking your page or reporting your posts as spam, then you need to

know. For the breakdown you have to download the excel report in your Facebook insights. If your average negative feedback number is too high, your posts will get less exposure over time so it is paramount that you look at what posts are getting you negative feedbacks and when, as you can then use this information to adjust your content or marketing efforts accordingly.

Conversion

Another piece of important information to track is how much traffic that your page brings to the rest of your website. In other words, how many fans are converted into potential customers? If a significant number of website visitors were referred from Facebook, you know that your posts are generating interest in your products or services and are possibly helping to drive sales. Tracking this number is the true measure of your Facebook marketing ROI as even if you're generating traffic and leads from Facebook, if they're ultimately not turning into customers you may have to re-evaluate how much time and effort you're putting into Facebook as a social media marketing channel.

Likes and Unlikes

How quickly are your fans growing? It's not all about the numbers but, if you're attracting the right audience and they are engaging with your content, then of course you want to see some fan growth. Tracking the rates at which you are liked and disliked by others is an important metric to regularly analyse as it will show you when you have performed well and the times when you haven't allowing you to establish what you did at those times that could have made others follow you or unfollow you. Learning from this information helps develop a more successful strategy as it will show you the areas in which your audience responds to better and which areas they didn't, allowing you to learn what your audience wants and then applying it to your future efforts.

Engagement by Type of Content

Different types of content perform differently on Facebook and it is vital that you ascertain which formats (status update, picture, video upload, a link to video etc.) perform better or worse with your audience. If there are certain types of content performing well, you'll want to share more of this type of content. Whilst it's always good to have a mix of content but you need to give more emphasis to the high-performing content.

Audience Profile

What type of audience are you building and attracting? You may have the most engaging content in the world but you could be attracting the wrong audience. It is vital to keep track of your fans and ensure they are the ones you want to target.

Audience Response Rate

How quickly are you responding to comments? The more engaged you are with your audience, the more engaged they will be with your brand and your content. You need to regularly check how quickly you are responding to the comments on your Page, and make sure you aim to have a fast and high response rate.

Facebook Maintenance Checklist

DAILY

- ✓ Respond to any interaction - new messages, tags, likes and comments i.e.
- ✓ Engage with and contribute to Facebook groups
- ✓ Post at least one status update with original, relevant and interesting business content being aware of the best time to publish
- ✓ Check relevant hashtags that present opportunities to interact
- ✓ Go through news feed and get updated on news and insights and add your thoughts and comments to any relevant discussions and/or share relevant content
- ✓ Share at least 3 interesting status updates you find.
- ✓ Running Facebook Ads? Review stats twice daily.
- ✓ Locate 3 relevant pieces of content your audience would like and schedule it.
- ✓ Review Facebook Insights. Look for trends and emulate them.
- ✓ Listen for and respond to every lead immediately.
- ✓ Look to see if any new connections from other social media platforms have Facebook and like their Page
- ✓ During the week gather information and sources for the following weeks post(s)

WEEKLY

- ✓ **Check Your Insights:** Your analytics will help you figure out what your audience likes and doesn't like, so you can plan your future content better. It'll also help alert you to any red flags early on. Regularly go through your analytics and look at What kinds of topics resonate best with your audience? What posts grab attention? Fan Growth?
- ✓ Actively find and 'like' any relevant other businesses and industry influencers

MONTHLY

- ✓ **Review Your About Page:** Is your About page up-to-date? If anything about you, your business, or any other content on your About page has changed since you published it, then you should update it.
- ✓ **Clean up Your Apps/Sidebar:** Regularly assess that all of the elements in your pages sidebar are still timely, useful, and relevant. Keep it clean and useful by deleting extraneous elements and placing the best content in a prominent position.

TWITTER

Twitter is one of the largest and most active social networks, with over 330 million active monthly users sending more than 500 million tweets a day. Often referred to as a micro blogging service as it limits your status updates to 280 characters, Twitter is a real-time information network that encourages its users to share and discover interesting content. Businesses have utilised the benefits of Twitter, recognising that it is one of the quickest ways to get a message out to people who may be interested in your products, services, ideas or events and also gives the chance to get real time feedback from customers. Perhaps the greatest feature of Twitter is the ability for your followers to share your tweets with their following at the click of a button, this is called a 'retweet' and is what cements Twitter as a successful word-of-mouth platform that can help your message reach an entirely new audience of prospective customers.

What's good about Twitter?

- ✓ The Twitter feed is public which can help give your business greater exposure in web search results
- ✓ The site is like a public forum, so it's easy to build a community of potential customers
- ✓ It is a quick way to share links to content to help spread your message to a wide audience.
- ✓ It is an open network so anyone can read your updates regardless of if they are a user or not

What's not so good about Twitter?

- ✓ It's sometimes challenging to create a meaningful post in only 280 characters
- ✓ Building an active following takes time and requires a daily commitment to sharing content
- ✓ With so many identical-looking tweets, it's hard to make a single one stand out
- ✓ Users are very vocal, so if they have a problem they will say so
- ✓ The lifespan of a tweet is very short

Which Businesses Should be on Twitter?

Twitter is very popular tool for use as way of speaking to people directly and for quick, snappy updates. From this, if you are a business that regularly and frequently shares breaking news, updates and likes to engage with fans directly then it is worthwhile having a Twitter presence.

Need to Know Facts, Stats and Tips about Twitter

- There are 330M monthly active users
- A total of 1.3 billion accounts have been created
- 80% of active users access the site via mobile
- 707 is the average number of followers
- There are 500 million Tweets sent each day. That's 6,000 Tweets every second.
- It took 3 years, 2 months and 1 day to go from the first Tweet to the billionth.
- 77% of Twitter users feel more positive about a brand when their Tweet has been replied to
- 58% of top brands have over 100,00 followers on Twitter
- 92% of companies Tweet more than once a day, 42% Tweet 1-5 times a day, and 19% Tweet 6-10 times a day
- The average Twitter user follows five businesses
- 80% of Twitter users have mentioned a brand in a Tweet
- 54% of users surveyed by Twitter reported that they had taken action after seeing a brand mentioned in Tweets (including visiting their website, searching for the brand, or retweeting content)
- The last two years have seen a 2.5x increase in customer service conversations on Twitter.
- 60% of consumers expect brands to respond to their query within the hour, but the average is 1 hour 24 minutes.
- 76% of consumers are likely to recommend the brand following friendly service.
- Companies using Twitter for customer service see a 19% lift in customer satisfaction.
- Tweets with images receive 18% more click throughs, 89% more likes, and 150% more retweets.

Why You Need Twitter For Your Business

Twitter might not be as large as Facebook, but it does have an extensive and constantly growing reach. Twitter places emphasis on sharing easily digestible newsworthy content and quick updates and exchanges. This makes it a refreshing social media platform that businesses have quickly utilized, using it extensively for making announcements, providing customer service and sharing online content.

Connect With Customers

Twitter is a great platform for connecting with your customers and providing customer service. It can be used beneficially for your business in that you can listen to and develop a relationship with your customers and gain feedback on how you can improve your product and services, both of which can greatly benefit your business in the future. In terms of providing value you can easily respond quickly and positively in real time to those that are interacting with you, showcasing your active customer service skills in responding to complaints, queries and general communications.

Keep Up To Date With Your Industry and Competition

Twitter will help you stay on top of your industry and market as it allows you to find out what people are saying in real time about a particular topic, enabling you to keep up to date with posts about your business, industry and your competition.

It Shows Your Personality

The internet can often be an impersonal place; however using Twitter offers a real time, informal and chatty platform for your opinions, stories, humour and advice that gives your business a human face. People are more likely to purchase products or services from a business they feel like they already “know” and having a profile that you regularly update can help create a community and allow your followers to feel like they know your business.

Networking

Twitter is a great tool to use for networking as through the use of tweetups and general sharing of content you can meet and interact with many new businesses, customers and other individuals local to you and within your industry that will grow your network and potentially lead to new business opportunities and relationships.

Brand Awareness

Millions of people use Twitter actively on a daily basis and so it is likely that your existing customer base and potential customers and prospects are already users. From having the ability to display your brand through a customisable profile together with being able to engage and directly interact with your followers who can easily share your content, Twitter becomes a powerful tool for helping small businesses to expand their reach and brand awareness across an active network.

Monitor Your Reputation

Knowing if people are talking about you and what they are saying is critical for your business and Twitter users are renowned for their frequent sharing of opinions (good and bad) about their experiences with businesses. Whether users are positive or negative about you on Twitter, ultimately you need to be there to address what they are saying either through a thank you or an acknowledgement of an issue and then a solution provided. By publicly responding to those that are talking about you, you tap into Twitter's use as a powerful customer service tool and you build trust with others as responding to them shows you are listening and genuinely interested in what they have to say and acting upon it will help you to better your business and experiences of customers.

Still not convinced? Here are 7 more reasons why you need a Twitter account:

- ✓ Free to use, though paid advertising opportunities are also available.
- ✓ Users will follow businesses they have previously purchased from.
- ✓ Allows you to answer questions, provide support and give news updates.
- ✓ Highly news-orientated, making it perfect for promoting fresh content.
- ✓ An invaluable platform for competitive research.
- ✓ Increase brand awareness and find new customers.
- ✓ Gain even more exposure with the use of popular hashtags.

Creating a Twitter Account and Getting to Grips with The Basic Lingo

While unregistered users can visit your profile (so long as it's public), only registered users can share tweets and interact with other users. So to properly use Twitter, you have to first sign up for a profile. To sign up, you need to fill in your name and email address, create a password, and choose a username. Usernames, or @handles, are alphanumeric (meaning they can include letters and numbers), are case sensitive and can also include underscores. You can change your username at any time provided the @handle you want is not already being used.

When you sign in to your Twitter account, you are then taken to your home page. Across the top of the page is your navigation bar, where you can access your home page, notifications and messages, and browse the Discover tab. On the right-hand side is a search bar, along with your user icon (this will take you to your account and profile settings) and a Compose Tweet button.

Under the navigation bar, on the left-hand side, is a box that displays your profile's cover photo, your user icon, name and @handle, along with the number of tweets you've shared, the number of users you follow and the number of followers you have. Below that is the trends box, which shows you the top 10 trending topics and hashtags on Twitter at that given moment.

On the right-hand side, (or depending on the size of your screen and your screen resolution, this box could be on the left-hand side below the trending topics box) there is another box entitled 'Who to Follow' that displays suggested Twitter users and gives you the option to import your contacts from Gmail or connect to other address books.

At the centre of the dashboard is your Twitter feed. At the top of the feed is a box in which you can compose a tweet. The rest of your Twitter feed contains tweets from users you follow along with occasional advertisements. The feed is updated in real time and features infinite scrolling as users share tweets. From there, you can retweet, reply and favourite the tweets of others.

Customising Your Twitter Profile

Twitter doesn't give users a lot of customisation options but it does allow for a little bit of personalisation. First, you need to upload a user icon. (Ideally one that is 400 pixels by 400 pixels and 2MB maximum). It can be photo or a logo it is up to you, just make sure that it is not left blank as the default Twitter user icon will be used which is an egg on a single-color background. Leaving it as such not only shows that you don't know how to use the platform, it also makes you look very unprofessional.

You can also add a header photo (similar to a cover photo on Facebook). This can be anything you feel represents you or your brand, just ensure it is a high quality image, relevant/appropriate to your business and is eye catching. Twitter header photos should be 1500 pixels wide by 500 pixels high, and a maximum of 5MB.

Your Twitter page's layout can't be changed, but for a little added visual customization, you can choose a theme colour. The theme colour you select will appear as an accent colour on your profile, mostly visible in links and when you hover over the navigation bar. You'll also be able to see this theme colour from your home page, and not just on your profile.

When it comes to your profile information, you can create a short bio about yourself, which is limited to 160 characters, 20 characters more than the tweet limit. You can also list the city you're located in and include a link to your website.

Verified Accounts on Twitter

Have you ever seen an account with a little blue and white checkmark next to the name? That badge shows that the account is verified by Twitter, meaning that the user is considered to be a key brand or individual. In the case of celebrities, verification is a way to differentiate between fake accounts impersonating the user and the authentic account actually run by that user. The requirements for verification are constantly being updated, but the website doesn't take things like follower count or tweet count into consideration. You can't request to be verified — if Twitter thinks you meet the requirements, they'll find you and verify you eventually. Verified accounts benefit from access to special features, like filters in their notifications page, access to account analytics that include data about their followers and engagement with their tweets, and more.

Verified Twitter users can lose their verified status if they violate the Twitter rules or terms of service, change their @handle, or protect their tweets. In this case, Twitter will automatically review the user's account again to make sure it's still eligible for verification.

The Anatomy of a Tweet

Posting on Twitter is fairly straightforward. It's mostly text-based, with a strict 140-character limit that forces your messages to be short and to the point.

A tweet can also contain content formats other than just text;

- **Links:** Sharing links to your content or content from other websites that is relevant to your brand is a great way to make your Twitter feed more interesting and engaging. A top tip is to use a link-shortening service like Bit.ly when adding links to your tweets to save more room for text.
- **Images:** Twitter also allows you to share images in your tweets. Simply upload the photo or image(s) you want to share in the Compose Tweet box. As with adding links, adding photo(s) will take away from your available character count, so plan accordingly.
- **GIFs:** GIFs are essentially moving images taken from videos, and they're very popular and all over the Internet. Uploading GIFs in your tweets is a great way to incorporate meme marketing in your Twitter strategy.
- **Videos:** You can also share Vine videos and YouTube videos to Twitter, simply by sharing links. As with adding links or photos (or GIFs) to your tweets, adding a video takes up some of the character count available to you.
- **Polls:** Polls allow you to pose a question to your followers and track their votes. To add a poll to your tweet, click the Poll button at the bottom of the tweet composition box and fill in what you want the voting choices to be. Polls have a default of at least two choices, but you can add up to two more (for four choices total.) You can also fill out how long you want your poll to run for in days, minutes and hours.

Interacting With Others on Twitter

There are several ways to interact with other Twitter users, both publicly and privately.

- **@mentions:** The easiest way to reach a Twitter user is by tagging that user's @handle in your tweet. This will notify the other person, while other users who see the tweet can click on the @handle to see the person you're talking about. Top Tip: If you want to start your tweet with the other user's @handle, you need to place a period before the @ symbol if you want it to show up on your feed. This is not necessary however if you do not care if other users see your Tweet.
- **Likes:** If you like a particular tweet but don't want or need to respond to it, you can favourite it by clicking the heart button under the tweet. Your likes are stored in a list on your Twitter page that is visible to you and anyone who visits your profile.
- **Retweets:** Retweeting allows you to share what other Twitter users post so that your followers can see those posts as well. There are two methods of retweeting: You can click the retweet button under the original tweet, which will share the tweet in its original form on your feed, or

you can quote the original tweet. When you retweet, it'll show up on your feed with the other user's profile picture and @handle. To quote a tweet or manually retweet, simply highlight, copy and paste the tweet into the compose tweet box, and write "RT" and the user's @handle before the tweet. You can also put quotes around the tweet, though some users do not. Quoting a tweet instead of directly retweeting it allows users to add their own thoughts to it or share it with other users by tagging their @handle in it.

- **Direct messages:** To privately interact with other Twitter users, the social network allows you to direct-message people (usually referred to as a DM on Twitter). Direct messaging used to be closed so that only users who were following each other could use the feature, but now everyone has the option to make their DMs open to the public.

Twitter Hashtags

A hashtag is, as defined by the Oxford dictionary "A word or phrase preceded by a hash sign (#), used on social media websites and applications, especially Twitter, to identify messages on a specific topic" and its first known use was back in 2008.

Hashtags are searchable on Twitter and therefore are a great way to make the content you share on the platform visible to users beyond your own followers. There are many highly popular hashtags that generally all active Twitter users are familiar with, like #FollowFriday (or #FF), which encourages your followers to reach out to other users you admire or work with, and #ThrowbackThursday (or #TBT), which encourages users to post vintage or childhood photos and memories. You can also create your own hashtags to draw attention to your brand.

Many Twitter users add their hashtags at the ends of their tweets, but you can add hashtags anywhere you want in the text. Just make sure the hashtags you use are relevant to your business and you limit their use to two or fewer per tweet. Top Tip: Do not be tempted to add as many as possible to increase your reach. This doesn't work — in fact, the more hashtags you use, the less likely people are to interact with your content because they'll find your posts spammy and it makes you look unprofessional.

BONUS SECTION: Using Hashtags on Other Social Media Channels

Hashtags may have started on Twitter but now most social media platforms support hashtags. Hashtags give your brand more exposure so you can spread the word about your product to a massive audience. In addition, when you use it on multiple times on different channels, people will easily remember your hashtag.

- **Twitter:** Using hashtags on Twitter is vital for growth. Posts with hashtags get twice as much engagement as posts without hashtags, according to Buffer. Tweets with two hashtags get the highest engagement, and engagement falls as the number of hashtags increase.
- **Facebook:** Use 2 hashtags on Facebook try one popular hashtag and one custom hashtag for your brand but proceed with caution, yes, they allow hashtags and yes, people use them. Way

too much. In fact, three months after adopting the practice research that used EdgeRank information found that Facebook posts with hashtags had less engagement than those without.

- **Google+:** You can also use a hashtag in Google+ to find and join a conversation about a particular topic. If you post on G+, even if you don't use a hashtag, your post is automatically assigned a hashtag and made searchable through the largest search engine in the world. Google assigns at least one to your post using the post text and the headline of the link if there is one.
- **Instagram:** It allows up to 30 hashtags, however keep it to no more than 11 per post for the highest level of engagement. Instagram is an outlier when it comes to hashtags. While the other sites give you a diminishing return if you use more than one or two, on Instagram the rule is the more the merrier. However, be careful not to use highly popular hashtags. Use niche hashtags revolving around your industry and limit your use of hashtags to 15-20 within a given hour.
- **Pinterest:** Use only 2 hashtags, it's a category of search so use your unique hashtag to help pinners to find relevant content.

***Top Tip:** Search the hashtag before you use it. Check each of the social media networks to make sure that your hashtag isn't being used for the wrong reason. Also, ensure that you don't choose something that can be interpreted in a different way. It is worth making sure that another brand isn't using hashtag specifically for their own promotion as well. Before using a hashtag, always you need to search to see if other people are using it and what they saying.*

Trending Topics on Twitter

Trending topics are any topics that Twitter users are talking about at a very high rate. Often, these trending topics are hashtags, but they can also be words or phrases related to the subject. You can see the current trending topics on your Twitter home page in the trends box on the left-hand side.

When you click on a trending topic, it'll take you to a search page where you can view what people are saying about the topic, along with photos and related users. At the top of the page, you can select to view all of the tweets being shared, or just the top tweets — the ones getting the most interactions.

Twitter users can customise the trends box to show trending topics in different locations. For example, if you were in Birmingham, you could set it to only show you what's trending in Birmingham. You could also set it to show you trending topics in the United Kingdom overall, or around the world.

Topics become trending for a few reasons. Most commonly, trending topics result from breaking news or commonly talked about topics in the media. For example, if the UK election results were announced, you might see the candidates' names as trending topics.

Trending topics can also come about when large groups of Twitter users work together collectively to get a certain hashtag or phrase trending. For example, this is often the work of celebrity-obsessed fans,

so it's not uncommon to see things about One Direction, Justin Bieber Taylor Swift in the trending section.

Done right, trending topics can be a great way for brands to get noticed. Only use trending topics in your tweets if those topics are genuinely relevant to your brand, and make sure you use them appropriately.

Twitter Lists

Twitter offers its users the ability to make lists of other users they find interesting. This gives users another way of tracking what people post, except with lists, you don't have to be following the users you include to see their posts regularly.

Lists are handy if you want to better organize your following list. For example, you might make a list of known people in your industry and name it "Industry Influencers," or if you had an interest in something like photography and want to track users in your area who tweet about those things, you could make lists of "Manchester Photographers.'

Creating lists is simple, just click your user icon in the top navigation bar so that the drop down menu appears and click Lists. From there, you can see two tabs: lists you're a member of (i.e., lists you've been added to) and lists you're subscribed to (the lists you've created). You'll see a Create List button below the Subscribed To and Member Of links. When you create a list, type in the name you want to give the list and a short description, and then choose whether you want the list to be publicly visible or private (visible only to you). If you make your lists public, the users you add to it will be notified. Once you're done, simply click Save List. After the list has been created, you can add users to it by clicking the gear button next to the follow button on their page, selecting "Add or remove from list" and then selecting the list you'd like to add them to.

Live Tweeting

Live tweeting is when a user tweets his or her reactions to a live event as it is happening. Live tweeting most commonly occurs with TV shows and televised events, however. If you've ever been watching a TV show and seen a hash-tagged phrase overlaid on the bottom of the screen, it's because the programme wants to encourage its viewers to tweet about the show as they watch. It is also popular with brands when they throw events and want their attendees to live tweet while they're there, the brand will often create its own individual hashtag to use and share with the invite list so that others can follow around.

The same goes for major televised events like the Brit Awards. It's not uncommon during events such as these to see the trends box filled with related topics — for example, in the case of the Brits, it wouldn't be surprising to see the official awards show hashtag along with the names of celebrities that win major awards.

Twitter Chats

A Twitter chat is when several Twitter users get together online to discuss a specific topic. To do so, they create a hashtag which participants then incorporate into each of their related tweets. Twitter chats are a great way to engage followers and/or get a topic trending. Twitter chats are straightforward, but they do require a decent and active follower base to be successful.

Usually, one Twitter user will host a Twitter chat at a specific time and prepare specific questions and discussion points. The host will tweet out the questions and other participants will respond with their thoughts. Twitter chats usually last about an hour. They are a great way to show how active you are on social media and to get your followers (and their followers) engaged and asking questions or sharing their advice.

Questions to Help Form a Successful Twitter Marketing Strategy

Before you jump in and start tweeting there are several key strategic elements you must consider in order to create a Twitter marketing strategy that will ensure your Twitter profile is going to be in line with your business objectives and ultimately be a successful addition to your social media marketing strategy.

Why is my Business on Twitter? What are my Goals?

One of the first things you must do is determine what you want your Twitter profile to achieve for your business. Whether you want to use it to support sales by giving potential customers useful information in the form of relevant news updates or use it as an outlet for customer service or to build your brand by providing content that supports your offering, having clear objectives for your profile help optimise its reach and impact. Having clear goals and objectives will guide and dictate how to develop other parts of your Twitter strategy so it is vital that you pick realistic, achievable and effective objectives for your business.

Common Twitter Marketing Goals

- Grow an Engaged and Relevant Following
- Generate Brand Awareness
- Generate Sales and Business Leads
- Customer Service Tool
- Establish Authority

Who Will be in Charge of Managing my Twitter Account?

Whether you will maintain your Twitter in house or hire an external social media manager or agency, you need to establish who will be maintaining your account and ensure that they are the right person who will present your brand well and effectively across Twitter. Part of this process is also ensuring the person running your account has a good understanding of your branding from the voice you want portrayed to how they interact and deal with queries/complaints etc. as they need to be able to confidently ensure they can represent your brand at all times.

Is my Target Market on Twitter, Who am I Going to be Tweeting to?

In addition to determining your objectives, having a clear idea of your target readers is paramount. Firstly you need to ascertain whether your target market is actually on Twitter in the first place and also doing your research and knowing who you are tweeting too is key to being able to tailor your tweets around content that maximises interest and engagement from your readers.

What am I Going to Tweet? Have I Got a Content Strategy in Place?

Creating a content strategy is a key part of your success on Twitter as it will give you clear and consistent guidelines on vital aspects such as what to post, when and what voice you will portray. Deciding on what major content categories you want to include regularly helps you to stay focused and maintains a clear direction for your tweets to go in order to ensure your content is in line with your business goals and is targeting reader's needs. Having a clear understanding of the frequency you will be posting is also paramount in order to ensure it is in line with your wider social media strategy. An important part of the content strategy development is also choosing the right 'voice' to portray for your business. Your tweets should reflect your personality as Twitter is a great way to show a 'human' side to your business that customers appreciate and prefer. It is important to have an idea of what voice you want for your profile as it needs to be consistently applied across all your posts, especially if your profile is going to be managed by several different contributors. In general many find there are several key characteristics of successful tweets such as showing a personality and being contextually relevant that ensure tweets are as engaging and interesting as possible. Put simply, avoid generic corporate speak and replace it with your own unique voice and customers will be more drawn to and engage with you on Twitter.

How am I Going to Measure my Success on Twitter?

In order to measure the success of your Twitter presence you need a solid understanding of the initial objectives you want to achieve for your business from using Twitter. Whether you want to use Twitter as a customer service tool or to drive traffic to your blog or website, having a clear vision of why you are using Twitter will automatically shed light on what metrics and other data should be looking at in order to measure your success. An important part of measuring your success is also learning what works and what doesn't. As your strategy develops you may find you need to adjust your objectives so it is vital you

don't neglect your analytics as they will help you to build a solid, successful and competitive Twitter presence.

Tweeting: What, and How Often?

Now it's time to start tweeting, there are several fundamental basics to follow to ensure you create powerful and engaging tweets.

With over 5,700 tweets posted every second and each one having an average life span of 3 hours, it can be hard to make your tweet stand out from the crowd. For small businesses without an already established brand this is an even more difficult task to manage. There are however several guidelines available to aid you in what to tweet, but always remember these four key things;

Never Go For The Direct Sell

When you first start tweeting it may be tempting to go with the direct sale approach tweeting information about how wonderful your business is and all of the things you sell or offer. This however is not a successful approach and in most cases will see you viewed as a spammer and will quickly lead to people unfollowing you or not following you at all. To avoid making this mistake you must strike a balance between subtle business tweets and ones centred on customer engagement, with a favourable emphasis on the latter.

Say Something Interesting and Useful

Write your tweets with your target audience in mind so rather than trying to appeal to a generic wider audience, write content that contains specialised information and analysis that those interested in your services or in your sector would read. For ideas simply think about questions you had when starting out in your industry or flag up interesting case studies or advice. By openly giving out advice and information you will become an online repository of specialist knowledge and this will attract the attention of your target audience.

Try to Include Some Form of Media Within Your Tweet

A common mistake made with tweeting is not including some form of media content such as a relevant video or picture that can lead tweets to look uninviting and not capture a reader's attention. To avoid making this mistake make sure to tweet insightful and valuable content that your readers will want to read and looks visually appealing also. Tweets with some form of media such as a photo or link always get more clicks so it is vital that you try to include some form of relevant media.

Be Creative

People always respond better to something that is new, fresh and clever so always brainstorm ideas in the mind-set of producing something that is creative and breaks the mould of other generic tweets. You are competing in the fast-paced and growing industry of social media marketing so you need to make yourself stand out and give potential customers a compelling reason to choose you over your competitors.

Engagement on Twitter is reflected in five forms: retweets, favourites, clicks, lists and @mentions. Here are several ways to create the right type of customer engagement with your posts;

The Humanising Tweet

Twitter offers an informal and chatty platform for your opinions, stories, humour and advice that gives your business a human face. These types of tweets, whether they are photos of staff, office celebrations etc., are designed to show your audience that there exists real people behind your brand and helps them to connect with you and get to know you and your story better.

The Promotional Tweet

By giving discounts or other benefits to your Twitter followers, you give them a reason to follow you and as a result acquire a new audience that will then see your other business updates. Common twitter promotions offer a free gift or service upon receiving a certain number of retweets or followers.

The Answering Replies Tweet

Twitter is a great tool for customer service but if you fail to monitor and reply to what is being said about your company you're making a big mistake. Only when you engage with your customers and respond appropriately will you get the full value of Twitter as a customer service tool. This does not mean that you have to respond to every negative statement, but when there is a real issue or if a person has a specific question or wants to praise you, you need to address it quickly and honestly.

The Relevant Industry News, Trends or Events Tweet

To build your authority within your industry you need to act as a resource for people who come to you for relevant and up to date industry advice/news/ trends/ opinions and any other relevant articles that you know would be of interest to your target audience.

The Question and Participation Tweet

You will get a lot more out of tweeting if you enable and encourage your customers to respond to what you write. Beyond asking questions with your tweets, you also need to remember the conversation is

two-way, so respond to the comments readers leave and you are likely to develop a community on your Twitter profile that can help turn your customers into fans who will promote your products and services and provide you with quality feedback.

The Get to Know the Business Tweet

Successful tweets often share something with followers that they can't get anywhere else, something that is interesting and beneficial that lets them know more about a business. People are more likely to purchase products or services from a business they feel like they already "know" and having a profile that you regularly update can help create a community and allow your readers to feel like they know your business.

The Relevant Resources and Links Tweet

If you regularly read industry news and find interesting articles, share them with your audience and add your own thoughts. This will go a long way in developing your reputation as a thought leader and as a source where people can come to find valuable and interesting industry insights.

The Fun Tweet

Sharing updates that are entirely business related all the time can lead to a monotonous twitter presence and may lead to unfollows as people think you are just trying to hard sell to them all the time. Instead look to strike a balance between business updates and ones that are fun, light and full of humour as you will attract followers and also go a long way towards humanising your business.

Miscellaneous Tweets

There are many options for what information you can tweet to your followers and as you move forward you will find the content that works best for you and your target audience. Ultimately, share what you feel is interesting and relevant and will interest your readers and encourage them to engage with you and share your content. For example many businesses use Twitter to tweet quotes that inspire them, promote a charity the business supports and to share the news if the company has won an award, received a great review, garnered some major press or has a great testimonial.

Although it takes some experimentation to find the best schedule for you, there are two things that should always be considered and will dictate your tweeting schedule; your company goals and what your audience wants.

In general, 3-15 great content tweets per day are a good general amount to sustain an active presence on Twitter. This however may vary depending on what works best for your company, goals and readers so it is important to experiment to find a tweeting schedule that works for you. For example, if your goal is to become a cutting edge information resource, you might be continually posting breaking news and events in your sector or industry, on the other hand if your main audience is mostly interested in technical or behind-the-scenes details, you'll probably tweet information less often. So the first step to determining your ideal tweeting frequency is to find the perfect balance of what you want and what your audience wants.

To maximise the benefits of having Twitter you need to ultimately ask yourself, Can you keep this schedule consistently?, Can you always tweet high-quality content at this rate? And will you have enough content for this schedule? Once you've discovered the best times to tweet, being consistent with your publishing schedule has the benefit of encouraging new followers and the potential for retweets that will enhance your brand and impact.

How to Write an Effective Tweet

Twitter currently supports four formats that you can use to create your social media updates:

- Status Update
- Link Share
- Photo Upload
- Video Link Share

While it took three years, two months, and a day to reach the billionth tweet shared, it now only takes one week to send one billion tweets. To help you get noticed among all this noise, take note of the following tips:

Start with a Relevant Following

The key to a successful presence and indeed tweet begins with you having built up a relevant and engaged following that wants to engage with you. If you only followed others in the hope of gaining an easy follow back or bought followers then you are wasting your time as both of these types of followers are useless for your business as they will not engage with you and are likely to never become customers. Instead, look to build a relevant organic following by searching industry hashtags and follow those users that appear, include a follow me on Twitter link on your website and blog, tell your existing business

contacts and customers you are on Twitter and utilise your other social networks to bring audiences over from your other networks.

Establish Your Objective for the Tweet

Every tweet you share needs to have a purpose. Whether you want to create interest in your latest blog post, promote a new product or service or generate engagement through a Q&A, knowing your objective will dictate and affect every aspect of what you include in your tweet from the links you'll include, where they go, the tone of the tweet, the CTA you include, right through to how you will measure the success of your tweet.

Create a Headline That Grabs Attention

At any given time there could be hundreds of tweets in your target audience's Twitter feed and to ensure you stand out people need to be given a good reason to click on your link which is why creating a well-written, clear and attention grabbing headline is vital. Before you tweet simply ask yourself if you would share and click on that tweet based on its headline and if you wouldn't then you need to change it.

Keep the Tweet the Optimal Length

The limit for characters within your tweets is 280; however you do not have to use them all. Rather it is suggested that the optimal length for a Tweet is around 70-100 characters as this makes your tweet short enough to digest within a few seconds and is the right length for anyone who wants to retweet and add on a couple words for their own comment.

Include Some Form of Media

To make your tweets attract more attention it is recommended that you include some form of media content such as a photo or video as this makes the tweet more interesting and appealing. So make sure to tweet and share insightful, informative and valuable content that your readers will want to click on and looks visually appealing also.

Pay Attention to Spelling and Basic Grammar

You represent your brand with every tweet you post so don't leave your audience with a negative and unprofessional opinion of your business by not taking the time to proofread for spelling errors and not checking your general grammar. Ensure your tweet is clear, concise, the punctuation use is correct, you have correct spelling and you clearly spell out your words instead of using abbreviations to save characters as many followers may not be familiar with certain abbreviations.

Include a Clear Call to Action

Ensuring you include a clear call to action in every tweet you post ensure that each tweet will be purposeful for your business. Whether you want to direct the reader to a new blog post, a product page or to a newsletter signup page ensure you make it clear and concise to the reader what the next step is that you want them to take.

Utilise Relevant Trends and Hashtags

Hashtags are a great tool for connecting to a wider audience so ensure you utilise them within your tweets. For ideas you can relate them to the content you are posting to enhance the tweet or for content ideas you can do a search within your business community to see what is trending and if relevant, add your thoughts. It is important not to jump on and use any hashtag that is trending as many won't be relevant for your business, rather the key is to be selective and only utilise those that are relevant and will enhance your business in some way.

You can also create and promote a hashtag campaign yourself to help revive your community and spark conversation around your brand with both old and new customers. To start a hashtag campaign, decide on the goal of your campaign and how it will relate to your customers. Then research what your audience is talking about to come up with a hashtag that they'll identify with.

Using Links? Ensure They've Been Shortened

Using a link shortening tool such as bit.ly to shorten your URL's not only helps you easily gain more characters to use, it also provides valuable insights into how the link is being shared which is essential for future content creation and link selection.

Top Tip: Try placing links in the middle of the tweet. Dan Zarrella found that placing links roughly 25% through a tweet leads to a higher click through rate than including the link at the very end. This is probably due to the fact that most tweets include the link automatically at the end, so anytime there's a variance in a user stream, the tweet catches our attention more.

Actively Learn From the Tweets of Others

Be active in looking through your feed and looking at the tweets that stand out for you as this can give you valuable tips that can help guide you in creating better tweets in the future. To those tweets that stand out to you and made you click on them analyse why and look to what makes that tweet so good then apply it to your own tweets. By consistently looking at others and learning you will gain the necessary knowledge to know what makes a great tweet that your audience can't resist which in turn will

make you gain more followers, respect, authority and ultimately make your Twitter presence more successful.

Optimize Twitter Publishing Times

The shelf life of a link on Twitter is only 2.8 hours. In order to get the maximum impact of each tweet, you need to publish your tweets at optimal times. According to recent data from Kevan Lee at Buffer...

- the most popular time to tweet: noon to 1 p.m. local time
- the early morning hours is when tweets receive the most clicks, on average
- the fewest tweets are sent between 3 and 4 a.m.

These are a general guide however as through your own testing and regular assessments of your analytics, you will come to learn the most effective publishing times for you.

Advertising Basics on Twitter

Using Twitter is free, but if you'd like to pay to promote your account on the platform, there is a robust selection of advertising options available to you.

- **Promoted Tweets:** These ads are just like regular tweets, and they appear in a user's Twitter feed along with posts from people the user follows. Promoted Tweets are used to increase engagement and expand your reach to a wider group of users beyond your follower base. These tweets are labelled as "promoted" across the bottom of the ad, above the reply, retweet and like buttons.
- **Promoted Accounts:** Promoted Accounts are designed to help brands become more discoverable and grow their follower counts. These ads are displayed in multiple locations on Twitter, including the Who to Follow box on the home page, your home page's Twitter feed and search results. Promoted Accounts ads are designed to target Twitter users who have interests relevant to the advertiser's brand, so that brands can gain followers who are more likely to interact with their content. All of the ads are labelled as "Promoted" just like Promoted Tweets are.
- **Promoted Trends:** Promoted Trends appear at the top of the trending topics list in the trends box on Twitter and, like other Twitter ads, are clearly labelled as "Promoted." These ads look exactly like other trending topics, and users can interact with them in the same ways. While Promoted Tweets and Promoted Accounts target specific users, Promoted Trends are visible to all users when the trends are being promoted. They're also visible on Twitter's mobile apps. If you're looking to get people talking about your business using a specific hashtag, Promoted Trends are a great way to do so.

In addition to these options, Twitter has a host of other marketing tools designed to help advertisers improve their campaigns.

- **Twitter Amplify:** Twitter Amplify is a tool that allows advertisers to share real-time television content that they can integrate with their brand or sponsors. It is designed to help brands reach users beyond their current followers by delivering content to targeted audiences.
- **Promoted Video:** While Twitter Amplify gives brands the ability to share videos from TV programs and other broadcasts, Promoted Video opens up the possibilities to any kind of video. Promoted Video is different from sharing a YouTube video in your tweets — while both methods allow you to play a video in a tweet, Promoted Video content is hosted directly by Twitter and is only available as a paid marketing tool.
- **Mobile App Promotion:** This option lets advertisers target and reach their desired audiences via mobile devices to drive app downloads. Advertisers can create a custom image and app description for use in the ad, and target users by their location, gender, language and mobile platform. The tool also features a unique measurement system so advertisers can see how their campaigns impact app installs, purchases and registrations.

How to Build a Following and Amplify Your Impact

Writing your tweet is only the beginning. The next challenge is to promote your profile in order to get maximum exposure and attract attention. Rather than relying solely on search engines, there are several other key techniques you can employ to help get your content noticed.

Get Talking...

Central to building your followers is interaction and creating conversation. When your visibility increases, so do your followers. Asking questions is one of the best ways to get conversational on Twitter, but just as important is to participate in other people's conversations and provide information to them that they will find engaging, relevant and useful. The key to maximising your impact and gaining followers is to share ideas with and reply to those who have shared interests with you, therefore write your tweets with your target audience in mind rather than trying to appeal to a generic wider audience. Include content that contains specialised information and ideas that those interested in your services or sector would read. Be conversational about topics that will be of interest and provide value to others and this will encourage your followers to reach out to their own networks and help spread your message and build your brand following.

... And Stay Talking

Building an active following takes time and requires a daily commitment to sharing content. There are more than 9,500 tweets posted every second, according to Internet Live Stats. Posting valuable content is the only chance to break through the noise. It is therefore vital that in the very beginning you figure out a comfortable tweeting routine that works with your editorial calendar, be it tweeting 5 or 20 times daily, and stick to it in order to maintain consistency and maximise your impact.

Use Your Followers to get More Followers

Create tweets that encourage your followers to retweet. A common method is to announce that you'll offer a discount or some other benefit to everyone who retweets your offer, but only if you get a certain total number of retweets. Offer your customers a reward if they mention your business — a discount, free trial, or extra service, whatever is relevant for your business. It's also a good idea to include a link to the terms and conditions of your offer in the Tweet.

Promote Your Twitter @username

Anywhere your customers interact with your brand is an opportunity to encourage them to follow you on Twitter. Once you begin tweeting, remember to promote it across all your other social media platforms and that includes mentioning it on your e-newsletter, your email signature, business card, product packaging and anywhere else your customers will see it. This also applies if you're an active participant in a forum or membership site, placing a signature with your Twitter link will direct more attention to your page.

Use Twitter Directories

Directories categorise Twitter users into areas of interest and expertise allowing you to easily find, follow and interact with industry influencers and other similar business owners and businesses relevant to you. Not only does this allow you to connect with quality people on Twitter it opens you up to the potentially valuable information that they share and also opens you up to their audiences if they interact with you and share your tweets.

Utilise Relevant Hashtags and Trends

Ensure that you actively pay attention to relevant trends and hashtags and act when you can see an opportunity that you can utilise. Things that are popular at a certain time create a great opportunity for you to attract new followers so whether it's a person or event that is trending and relates to your business ensure you jump on board and share a piece of content that fits in as you will stand a good chance of gaining some of the traffic and attention that comes with a trending topic thereby opening you up to a new audience and potential new followers.

Go to Tweetups

Tweetups are a great way to connect in person with those that you follow and interact with on Twitter. Whether you attend an already established Tweetup or you create your own remember to extend the Tweetup invite to the networks of your followers as this has potential for greater reach and audience which is a great way to network with others leading to new relationships and potential future business opportunities.

Promote Your Profile

Anywhere your customers interact with you both online and offline is an opportunity for you to direct them to your Twitter account. Share a link or include a follow me box on your website, blog, Facebook profile, email signature, e-newsletter, LinkedIn profile and anywhere else that you have a web presence will help expand your audience and boost your follower count. Offline you can utilise word of mouth and place your Twitter handle on business cards, signage and any other corporate literature.

Optimise and Refine Your Twitter Bio

Your Twitter bio constitutes one of the most important aspects of your profile as your bio is crucial in persuading or dissuading another user from following you. Users will often make a snap decision based on what you have written so it is crucial to present yourself in a professional, targeted and interesting way. Your bio should clearly tell people what you do, what updates they should expect from following you, and why they should follow you. In order to attract and encourage your target audience and the people in your niche to find and follow you, you need to include the right keywords and details

Stay Human!

The key to success on social media is to remember that you are dealing with people, and people respond to people! To encourage engagement, deepen relationships and attract attention it is vital to present yourself as a 'real' person through a relaxed, approachable and 'human' tone. One of the worst things a business can do on Twitter, and any other social media, is to be 'automated' and 'salesy' and provide boring updates rather than actively engaging their audience with informative, engaging and entertaining content. Make yourself attractive to social media users by letting them know there exists a 'real' person behind the brand by sharing your brand story, making them laugh and encouraging engagement through create content.

Be Active and Post Consistently

When someone checks your Twitter profile, they are able to see how active you are and when you last posted. There is nothing worse than for them to see an irregular posting schedule or no postings at all, as they will immediately make the decision that you are not worth following. Being regular with your Twitter activity shows others that you are interested in interacting and engaging with a community

which encourages others to follow you and join in. People are on social media to be informed, engaged and interact with friends, family and their favourite brands etc. so show them you are interested in what they have to say by joining in with, encouraging and utilising the conversations others are having online.

Include User Handles for RTs

Give your tweet the best chance of getting retweeted by including the handle of the contributor(s) of the original content that you are sharing or some other relevant user that you want to target.

Tag Users in Photos for More Retweets

With Twitter's limiting character constraints, it's not always easy to include all the user handles you would like to in your tweets. A great tip is to upload a photo to Twitter, as you can tag up to 10 people in that photo. All the people tagged will be notified and so it helps get more potential users to retweet your content. You can frequently use this tactic to include tagging post authors, brands mentioned, or simply the people in the photo.

Link to Problem-Solving Content

One way to grab your followers' attention is to provide content that is valuable to your target audience and will help improve their lives in some way. To identify what content might be valuable to your audience, read through your followers' profiles to discover their likes, dislikes and current influences. Select a common issue that they're dealing with then create content that presents a solution to their problem and promote it on Twitter. It is important that you do this in a genuine and non-self-serving way as your audience will quickly see through your deception. Genuinely look to provide value to their lives and you will find doing so is a great way to integrate your brand into their lifestyles and help you build more genuine customer relationships.

Run a Contest

People love giveaways, so running a Twitter contest for a chance to win free stuff is a good way to encourage engagement. You will also benefit from all of the social mentions as they will boost brand awareness. Choose a giveaway that is relevant to your audience with a contest theme that resonates with your followers. When deciding how people will enter the contest it's important to keep a low barrier to entry to make it easy for people to participate. Make sure you promote the contest on multiple social media channels.

Offer Personalised Encouragement

Customers are thrilled when you show them respect and appreciation by devoting the time to interact with them. Give your fans words of encouragement. Identify tweets that announce major milestones

(such as a new home, baby, running a marathon, getting or married) then craft a short message of encouragement. You can make the message more personal if you don't use any hashtags.

Share Your Followers Tweets

Retweet your followers to show you recognize the value of their content and that what they're saying or posting online matters. When retweeting your followers, be sure to choose relevant tweets that align with your brand's values, add a comment to the retweet to contribute something to the conversation and that the user's profile is a real person. How often you retweet is up to you, some experts recommend 20% of your tweets should be retweets whilst others recommend a 50/50 split. Find out what works best for your industry and your audience and go from there.

Use IFTTT to Curate Twitter Lists Automatically

When you add people to a Twitter list, it shows to them that their tweets are valuable enough to you to be put in a specific category and as such, the people on your lists are likely to reciprocate the favour by following your account. While adding users to a Twitter list manually takes time, a great tool for making it easier to automate the process is IFTTT. To create an account with IFTTT head to their website and create an account or login, then connect your Twitter account. Next, create a 'recipe' that tells your Twitter account that when a new tweet is posted with a hashtag you determine, it should add that user to a one of your lists. Now, whenever people tweet with the hashtag in your recipe, they will be automatically added to your list. Some people will follow you immediately after this, so be sure to send out a tweet to thank them. Connect with the others on your list with a tweet, saying that you added them to your list because you find their content valuable.

Respond to Tweets From Big Brands

It's good practice to get into the habit of replying to relevant tweets posted by influential accounts with hundreds of thousands or millions of followers. When you tweet actively and consistently, your tweets and account are more likely to get noticed and followed. Responding to a giant in your industry is a prime opportunity to engage with a bigger audience. Once you respond, your tweet is attached to their tweet and everyone else can see it. Just remember to do it in a genuine way when you can truly add value to the conversation.

Thank People Who Engage With You

Thank and engage with people every single time they engage with you, whether they ask a question, offer a suggestion, mention you at an event, favourite one of your tweets etc. Not only will this help you keep followers, it also prompts them to share your content even more with their network, helping to increase your visibility. People really appreciate brands who listen to what they have to say and respond to them. Getting in this habit is a great way to organically build an engaged Twitter community.

Tweet Those You Quote

When you write a blog post that includes a Twitter user remember to @mention those you include. People love to see their names published so tweet directly to them and tell them about it and they'll want to read what you said. From this, they will be likely to reply, retweet and follow you back. If they are particularly influential and have hundreds of thousands of Twitter followers, they may retweet and respond which increases your visibility greatly to their audience and could add numbers to your following.

Embed Tweets Into Blog Posts

A great method to increase the visibility of your tweets is to embed them into your blog posts. Write a blog post then embed some of your own tweets, as well as tweets from other experts, to help beef up the content. To embed a tweet into your blog, simply click the three little dot below the tweet on your Twitter desktop version. Then hit Embed Tweet to get the code. This is also a great tactic to entice readers to follow you as this shows your readers some of your tweets, and gives them great examples of what they'll get if they follow you.

Install Twitter Buttons, Widgets and Apps

Visitors to your website will often look for different ways to follow you on social networks, so make sure your website is primed and ready with follow buttons and widgets in prominent places. If you sell products, give away free downloads or have an email subscribe option on your website and include follow buttons on your thank-you pages. Be sure to also add a Twitter widget to your website and a Twitter app on your Facebook fan page to show your fans your tweets. This is a sleek cross-promotion method that gives fans a taste of your tweets and encourages them to follow you.

Participate in Twitter Chats

A Twitter chat is a live event that focuses on one subject and is moderated by an individual or brand. People in the chat use a single hashtag and respond to the questions or comments coming from the moderator and/or interviewee. Getting involved in Twitter chats is great for increasing your visibility and gives you the opportunity to share your expertise with new people. Interact with other chat attendees and gain more organic followers along the way.

Share Other People's Content

To develop valuable relationships and start the cycle of reciprocity on Twitter, actively share content from others. Find blogs, news articles and opinion pieces that involve your niche and broadcast their posts to your Twitter followers taking care to include the author's Twitter handle, as well as the blog's Twitter account. The author will get a notification you shared the post and is liable to reply, retweet and maybe even follow you.

Have Fun!

Whilst most of your content needs to be in alignment with our brand, every once in a while it pays to give yourself and your fans a break. Brighten up your followers' feeds with a Twitter "coffee break," so instead of the usual articles, links or niche-based content you post share some fun material, whether it's interesting facts or statistics, cute videos, adorable pictures, tips or jokes. Fun tweets like this can get you a lot of engagement and sharing. However do take care to not post anything offensive or completely irrelevant to your business.

Tips for Success

Use Hashtags Judiciously

Do not overload your tweets with hashtags to try and gain visibility. While hashtags can be helpful and open up your content to relevant audiences, Twitter itself says that including more than two hashtags in a tweet is likely overkill. This is supported by a Salesforce study that found tweets with 1-2 hashtags receive 21% higher engagement than those with 3+ hashtags. Stick to a couple of relevant Hashtags per tweet to keep it focused.

Upload Photos in the Correct Size

You need to ensure the images you upload are optimized for the correct dimensions. Most people assume that a perfectly square image is the best dimension for Twitter, but the most engaged with Twitter photos are the horizontal ones that render nicely in a user's horizontally structured stream. The ideal dimension therefore is 440 x 220px.

Answer Customer Calls for Help

Twitter is a great place for you to strengthen customer relationships by showcasing your customer service skills and helping to solve your customers' problems. You can give your Twitter followers one-on-one assistance through direct messages and/or engage with the customer's tweet and then move the conversation to direct message. It's important that you strive to respond to customer concerns in a timely manner and state your customer service hours of operation in your profile. If you don't, people will assume a service representative is on duty 24/7.

Utilise Keywords in Your Tweets

Choose several keywords that accurately and best describe your business and industry and strategically use them within your tweets. Doing so gives each of your tweets a purpose as you will show up in search results relating to your keywords and get found by a new, relevant audience.

Connect and Interact With Relevant People

One of the most important parts of a successful Twitter strategy is following and interacting with quality, relevant people not just anyone who you think will follow you back. You need to be selective and targeted with those you choose to follow as you need them to be the right people who will be interested in your content and from whom you can build a relationship with. Importantly, you need to actively and regularly seek out relevant people through directory searches, influencer twitter lists and through looking at who others are following and then listening to, starting and joining in with conversations with them. Remember to also show your excellent customer service skills by regularly searching for anyone who talks about your brand and interacts with you and interact with them back. Also actively listen to conversations surrounding your industry and by adding your thoughts to the conversation you can establish yourself as an authority within your sector. Doing this will get you more noticed by others and increase your brand exposure resulting in a successful Twitter presence.

Be Social

If someone has taken the time to connect with you, start a conversation or retweet you then remember to reciprocate and interact with them back. Twitter is a powerful tool for helping spread the word about your business so it pays to deliver a good, personal customer service for all those who are looking to interact with you. A simple retweet can go a long way towards helping another business in your community so when relevant look for great content from others to share with your audience and you will be rewarded with greater exposure and develop a genuine rapport within your Twitter community. Remember the purpose of using social media is to be social so look to get to know others on Twitter by actively looking for great content that you can share and comment on, conversations that you can join and by encouraging engagement and fostering good relationships.

Stay Relevant and on Topic

One of the important aspects of having a clear strategy is that it keeps you focused on what content you share with your audience and what kind of content is acceptable to retweet etc. Without a strategy it is easy to share and retweet a broad range of content that may not always be relevant for your business, so to ensure you are developing a quality audience that is relevant to you and also in order to help develop yourself as an authority within your sector it is vital that you stay relevant with what you post and ensure the content is tailored to meet the needs of your target audience.

Don't Be Tempted to Automate Everything

There are many tools available to help you automate your posts on Twitter which is an attractive option for a very busy business owner. However do not be tempted to automate everything as this defeats the purpose of using a social network as you deliberately miss out on the vital social aspect. From this, you need to be real and post in real time as this is the only way engage in real conversation within your community and show them that you are genuinely there to give value to them and interact with them. In addition if you automate everything you potentially open up yourself to an embarrassing event of one of your scheduled tweets being no longer relevant or cause offensive/ thoughtlessness etc. if events happen outside of the online world that may affect your tweet.

Keep Your Profile Updated and Optimised

Your Twitter profile represents your business in the online world and as such you need to ensure it represents you accurately. This means you need to regularly check your profile to ensure all information is updated and optimised, from an informative bio to a good headshot of yourself and a Twitter Header Image that is consistent with your branding and contains your contact details. Part of this process of staying relevant is to look to tailor your background image and/or profile picture to coincide with national holidays and other special events that are relevant to you.

Stay Updated on News and Changes of Twitter

As Twitter evolves it is likely to make important changes that you as a business need to be aware of. Remember to follow the official Twitter business page and subscribe to their blog to make sure you are aware and up to date with Twitter's business updates.

Be Visual

Tweets that contain visuals such as photos, infographics and videos get the highest amount of engagement on Twitter, so you need to actively and consistently incorporate visual elements into your tweets. Photos and videos are more visible and take up more space on a user's feed than a simple text based post so look to include high-quality, eye catching and relevant visuals and you will encourage your audience to interact with and retweet your content.

Include Strong Calls to Action

By ensuring you include a clear call to action in your tweets, you are making sure that each tweet is purposeful for your business. A call to action could be asking for a retweet, directing the reader to an external site or simply asking a user to interact with you, whatever your call to action is you need to ensure you consistently form tweets that encourage the reader to continue the interaction with you.

Create and Share Curated Lists

Twitter lists are a great tool to utilise for filtering information. With Twitter lists, you are able to categorise Twitter users into areas of interest, characteristics and expertise allowing you to easily find, follow and interact with industry influencers and other similar business owners and businesses relevant to you. As you follow more people, your feed gets noisy and crowded with tweets which may result in you missing important messages. To make sure you never miss an important message utilise Twitter lists and categorise the most important people you follow so you can easily see their messages and they don't get lost in the noise of everyone else. Not only does this allow you to connect with quality people on Twitter, it opens you up to the potentially valuable information that they share and also opens you up to their audiences if they interact with you and share your tweets. Another great feature of Twitter lists is that you can set them to be private or public. This allows you to be able to do a range of important tasks from 'secretly' monitoring your competitors with a private list or show off and share your impressive roster of brand advocates in a public list. By creating and sharing lists you position yourself as an authority in your field and are able to grow your Twitter community as people begin to trust you to curate the information they are seeking.

Reply to the Right Audience

Many users assume that every tweet they send appears in every one of their followers' feeds; however this isn't actually the case. If you begin a tweet with a @username only that user and any followers you both have in common will see the tweet in their feed, which limits a tweet's visibility greatly. Whilst limiting the visibility of a tweet can work in your favour, for example if you are responding to a user about a particular bad customer service complaint, by starting your replies with the @username you decrease the number of people who will see the potentially negative conversation. On the other hand, in most cases you want your tweets, especially your positive ones about recommendations, new product launches, customer testimonials etc., to have as much visibility as possible. In this instance you do not want to start a tweet with @username, instead you can use the common method of starting your tweet with a period then the username: .@username or the other method you can apply is to move the username further into your text, for example, "Thank you very much @username! We're glad you love our product."

Don't Just Tweet Article Headlines

Simply retweeting an article or sharing an article without modifying the headline is a common mistake seen on Twitter. It not only makes the user seem lazy and boring, it shows a missed opportunity for you to engage others. So instead of simply tweeting or retweeting the article using the headline already generated automatically for it, put in more effort into it by adding your thoughts and opinions based on the article, taking a retweetable quote from the article, pose questions about the article (e.g. "Have you tried this new tactic?") Or ask your followers for their opinion (e.g. "Has this marketing tactic worked best for you too?") to get people curious about it. This also has the added benefit of not only encouraging engagement, but shows yourself as an authority in your sector as you are sharing with your community valuable and trusted information and adding your valuable thoughts and creating debates.

The added benefit of sharing content in this way, especially if it is your own article you're sharing, is it also allows you to use all three methods to tweet about the same article multiple times. This is a great way to promote an article several times, each in a different way, without spamming your followers feeds.

Show Your Personality and Remember to Be Yourself!

The most successful businesses on Twitter are those that show the real people behind the brand. Twitter and social media in general offers an informal and chatty platform for your opinions, stories, humour and advice that gives your business a human face and it is through this great ability to humanise your business through the content you tweet that ultimately makes your business appear more engaging, relatable and trustworthy to others. Ensure you utilise this opportunity for your customers to get to know the real you better, so whether you are sharing industry expertise, reviewing a product or sharing an aspect of your brand story, each post gives your customers helping them to better understand who you are, what you do, and ultimately tells them why they should care about you.

Don't Give Up

After months of marketing efforts, you may still see a low follower count on your Twitter profile which can be disheartening. But don't give up because real success takes time and patience. The key is to stay consistent with your tweeting, add your own unique voice and views, engage with people who resonate with you and continually read up on it so you become better. Like any marketing tactic, it takes commitment, time and patience to become proficient at it.

Test Paid Marketing

Twitter, like many other social media networks, is free for users but offers a good selection of advertising options. Similarly to Facebook, followers you have may not see all of your organic posts and even the best campaigns with great potential are derailed if no one sees them, so it's best to reserve some funding for sponsored Twitter content to help boost your profile and keep your brand moving forward.

Get Happy

The science behind going viral and sharing contagious content lies in emotional content that pulls at the heart strings. Strive to consistently creating uplifting, positive content and you will be more likely to hit the viral sweet spot. Babies, kids, cute animals and everyday hero stories are always great for pulling at the heart-strings to connect on an emotional level.

Strike a Balance

On the one hand you need to engage your audience and interact with your followers, but on the other you don't want to become a nuisance account with it or you will quickly lose followers. Don't retweet

every mention you get, or tweet too often. You want your followers to view your updates as valuable and worthwhile, not be turned off by a constant onslaught that dominates their Twitter feed. If you learn from best practises and by looking at your analytics and what your audience tells you Twitter can one of the most powerful tools in your marketing arsenal if it's wielded correctly.

Be Real

Nothing is more attractive on a digital platform than a personality and the great thing about Twitter is that it allows you to be real in real-time, but in bite-sized chunks. Don't be afraid to be you on social media so if you have an original thought about a current event, a movie, a trending topic, an element of your industry, a brand, or a product then share it. You might be surprised at how many other people agree with what you're saying and want to engage with it. You will however make missteps, everyone does. After some time and with regular practice, you'll become more comfortable expressing yourself in 140 characters or less.

Link your Tweets Together

From time to time you might have thoughts that take up more than 140 characters and the good news is you can beat Twitter at its 140-character game by linking your tweets together. Linked tweets appear nicely connected in your followers' feeds and so this feature makes it easy for your followers to read a series of your tweets about the same subject, instead of having to fumble through their feed looking for your related tweets. Linking a tweet is simple, if you reply to your tweet and then delete your handle that automatically pops up at the beginning of the reply tweet, these linked tweets will appear seamlessly.

Pin a Tweet

A pinned tweet is a great introduction to your Twitter presence and a great chance to make a good first impression. Choose a tweet that performed particularly well, one that really expresses who you are, or announces something you want people to know about. The pinned tweet effectively announces your presence so make it a good one.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Only Tweeting About Yourself

The essence of social media marketing is about creating social engagement. Therefore you need to encourage interaction from your followers by sharing valuable and informative information and comments and listening to and joining in with conversations. Whilst you have a presence as you will

ultimately want to drive sales, your tweets should not blatantly reflect this, you need to instead focus on making people love your brand by sharing stories, responding to interactions and sharing and retweeting information they are going to find useful and interesting. A successful Twitter presence is one which is achieved through social interaction and not through pushy sales promotion tweets.

Begging for Followers

The more people that follow you results in the more reach you have for your tweets. This leads many businesses to beg for followers rather than earning them through posting engaging content, interacting with others and giving incentives to encourage people to follow. Begging for followers affects your businesses reputation online as it makes you appear untrustworthy and desperate.

Randomly Retweeting

Retweeting is a great practise for businesses to get into however many businesses make the mistake of using retweets as a way of replacing their own content and randomly retweet any content with no real thought to whether the content is relevant to them or their own audiences. Don't make this mistake by ensuring the content you are retweeting is relevant to your audience and in line with your own overall branding and marketing strategies.

Using Too Many Hashtags

Hashtags are a great way to gather traffic and attention by utilising relevant trends and highlighting keywords, but only if they are used correctly and effectively. The maximum number of hashtags to use per tweet is 3 as anymore can make it unclear to the reader what the main focus of your tweet is in addition to general making your tweet look unprofessional and demonstrates someone that doesn't really know how to use Twitter effectively. By making sure you have a clear goal and message for each tweet you will ensure you know where to clearly put your hashtag to maximise effectiveness.

Rapid Tweeting

It is clear when a business has no posting strategy as a look to their feed shows days go by without a tweet then there will be a sudden, rapid surge of tweets on a particular day. Do not let your business fall into this approach as not only will you lose and fail to attract new followers you also make it clear to people that you do not understand how to use Twitter making you appear unprofessional. There is no rule as to how often you should be tweeting as this is different for each individual so to ensure you are providing a consistent and effective tweeting schedule for your followers you should actively check your engagement rates to gauge the responses from your audience as this will show you what type of and how many tweets are the most effective.

Choosing a Long and/or Irrelevant Twitter Handle

Your Twitter handle needs to be clear and representative of your business. If your handle is too long then you're losing valuable space and if it is irrelevant then you come across as unprofessional and the lack of a handle that is clear to the brand may mean potential followers may miss out on finding you as it is not clear with your Twitter handle who you actually are.

Using Automatic Direct Messages

Sending an automatic direct message to followers is a common occurrence and one that reflects badly on your business. Don't make your first impression a negative one for the reader by sending an automatic and impersonal direct message. This makes you appear like a robot and often leads to unfollows and an overall general bad impression for your business.

Not Checking Your Tweets for Spelling and Grammatical Errors

You must remember that you represent your business with every tweet therefore it is vital that you review each tweet carefully before you post. A tweet that is grammatically incorrect, incoherent or riddled with spelling mistakes will affect your reputation negatively so ensure you double check your grammar, spelling and ensure your tweet is clear and concise before you post it.

Only Tweeting 9-5

Just because your working hours are only 9 – 5 doesn't mean that your audience is only going to be online and interacting at that time. Therefore you need to take the time to monitor your account at several points throughout the day, respond to any interactions from others and find out when your audience is most active on Twitter.

Connecting Your Facebook and Twitter Account

Connecting your Facebook and Twitter feeds, whilst appealing to a time-strapped business owner, is not recommended as each platform requires a tailored use of content and has a best time to post, therefore you need to treat your Facebook and Twitter accounts as separate entities and share your content individually by tailoring them to each one as opposed to having Twitter automatically tweet the same message you posted on Facebook.

Don't be an Egg

In the age of authenticity, where you need your brand to show a human side, you've got to treat your Twitter account as a customized digital representation of your personality. This means not leaving your profile picture as the default egg. Make sure you upload and choose a high-quality picture that is professional, relevant and representative of you and your brand.

Don't be Self- Serving

Don't be network-y in the sense that you openly act/express that the only reason you're on Twitter is for sales purposes. Many businesses on Twitter employ a tactic of pushing continual sales messages that offer little or no engagement and interaction. This is a very damaging approach. Instead you need to prove yourself to be part of the community, and the networking and leads will come in time naturally. If you engage, interact and provide value in the form of good content and a consistent presence, people will eventually find and follow you and importantly people won't follow you back just because you've asked them to. Twitter is a powerful and successful tool for those who approach it from a connecting and communing building point of view through active participation, not idle expectations and self-serving content.

Measuring Success

Like any other marketing strategy, the success of your Twitter profile must be measured against your business objectives. Analysing your Twitter metrics will show you a wealth of information and insights and help determine whether your profile is having a measurable impact and whether the data is reflective of the overall goals of your business Twitter profile.

Accessing your Twitter Analytics dashboard will show you monthly highlights and help you get to know your Twitter followers. You'll be able to see:

- Your follower growth
- Your followers' interests
- Your followers' demographics, such as language, gender, and location
- how many people have seen your Tweets, visited your profile, mentioned your @username, or followed your account
- Your top Tweets and follower with the largest network in any given month

Certain accounts will also be able to see data around their followers with regards to consumer behaviours, lifestyles, and mobile devices.

Follower Growth

Tracking your follower count is important as it shows you whether your Twitter strategies and campaigns are worthwhile and you are successfully attracting people to your profile and business. If your following remains constant over time, this could indicate that you're not utilising Twitter as well as you could and show areas in need of improvement. Your goal should always be to increase relevant

followers so you can grow your reach as greater reach results in more visibility of your tweets that could potentially lead to more leads and customers.

Follower Quality and Engagement

Engagement is about gauging how much people interact with you and the number and quality of retweets, favourites, @mentions, and lists and link clicks are a good way to measure engagement. Tracking these metrics on a regular basis offer the biggest returns in helping you grow your audience so it is vital that you utilise what each individual metric is showing you as using this information will help guide your strategy and ensure you are targeting your readers needs and encouraging interaction and engagement.

Conversion

Another piece of important information about your Twitter success that can be taken from your analytics is how much traffic that Twitter brings to the rest of your website. In other words, how many Twitter followers/readers are converted into potential customers? If a significant number of website visitors were referred from Twitter, you know that your tweets are generating interest in your products or services and are possibly helping to drive sales. Tracking this number is the true measure of your Twitter marketing ROI as even if you're generating traffic and leads from Twitter, if they're ultimately not turning into customers you may have to re-evaluate how much time and effort you're putting into Twitter as a social media marketing channel.

Link Shares

Particularly if you are sharing a lot of links from your website or blog, a metric you should be analysing is how many times your content has been shared on Twitter. An easy way to do this is by using a URL Shortening tool such as bit.ly as this tool not only shortens your link creating more character space for you in your Tweets, it also helps determine what types of content are most popular which will ultimately allow you to see which type of content you should focus on creating in the future.

Lists

Creating lists enables the user to filter the Twitter 'noise' and focus on what and who is important to them on Twitter. Therefore if you have been added to a relevant list then it shows you that you have been considered influential and that user wants to ensure that they always see your tweets. This is good indicator to you that the content you are posting resonates well with others which goes a long way to show you as an authority within your sector.

Twitter Maintenance Checklist

DAILY

- ✓ Post several original tweets sharing blog posts, tips, news etc.
- ✓ Engage with targeted people, prospects and industry influencers
- ✓ Search for tweets mentioning your business, product or service
- ✓ Search for and monitor hashtags and keywords relevant to you and/or your local area
- ✓ See who competitors, industry influencers etc. are following and if appropriate follow them too
- ✓ Respond to any interaction - new direct messages, favourites and mentions.
- ✓ Check relevant hashtags trending that present opportunities to interact
- ✓ Go through feed and get updated on news and insights and add your thoughts and comments to any relevant discussions and/or share relevant content
- ✓ Running Twitter Ads? Review stats twice daily.
- ✓ Listen for and respond to every lead immediately
- ✓ Look to see if any new connections from other social media platforms have Twitter and follow their account
- ✓ During the week gather information and sources for the following weeks post(s)

WEEKLY

- ✓ **Check Your Insights** - Your analytics will help you figure out what your audience likes and doesn't like, so you can plan your future content better. It'll also help alert you to any red flags early on. Regularly go through your analytics and look at what kinds of topics resonate best with your audience? What tweets grab attention? Follower Growth?
- ✓ Actively find and follow any relevant other businesses and industry influencers
- ✓ Go through your follow lists and unfollow anyone who is inactive

MONTHLY

- ✓ **Review Your Bio** - Is your bio up-to-date? If anything about you, your business, or any other content on your About page has changed since you published it, then you should update it.

FINAL WORDS

THANK YOU

Hopefully you have enjoyed reading this guide and start to see great improvements in your social media marketing by implementing the material that has been covered in this guide. I appreciate you taking the time to download this guide, and if you've got a moment, I'd love to hear what you thought about it.

Share your thoughts [here](#) or let me know what you thought over on [Twitter](#).

IF YOU GET STUCK

I'm only an email away, just give me a shout! I can always be reached on info@scarlettdarbyshire.co.uk or on Twitter. My handle is @ConsultScarlett. My passion lies in helping small businesses just like yours, so do not be afraid to reach out and ask.

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KEEP GOING!

Social media is more like a marathon than a sprint, but anything that's worth doing takes time. Just remember to keep at it and you will be glad you did a year from today!

WANT THE EXTENDED VERSION OF THIS EBOOK?

The extended eBook guide goes beyond the basic and is packed full of straight-forward and effective advice and guidance, cutting through the jargon and giving you all the essential knowledge to confidently grow your social presence, generate sales and leads on social media and make your mark on the online world. Throughout the book we look into more advanced key areas such as;

- An Introduction to Social Media
- How to Create a Social Media Strategy
- Best Practices for Social Media Marketing Success

- Important UK Internet Usage and Social Media Statistics
- A Comprehensive Look at all the Major Platforms – Facebook, Twitter, Blogging, Pinterest, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and more.
- Social Media Monthly Clean Up and Refresh Checklist
- 83 Engaging Ideas for Your Social Media Content
- Useful Tools and Apps to Help You Market Smart

Preview and buy the eBook over on Amazon! <http://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B079KJG7BC>

All information was correct at the time of writing (Jan 2018)