

A guide to social media marketing for small business



Paid content

If you're a small or mid-sized business (SMB) and you're not on social media, it might be time to up your game. Social media is not just for posting selfies and keeping up with friends. With billions of users, social media platforms offer SMBs a powerful tool to enhance brand visibility, engage with customers on a personal level and, ultimately, boost business success.

Making the decision to use social media is the first step. As for developing a clear social media marketing for small business strategy, you'll find a plethora of options that may feel confusing or overwhelming. Fortunately, this guide has what you need to know—from choosing social media platforms to tips on using them effectively.

The benefits of using social media for small business

Before diving into the world of social media, it's essential to establish clear goals. Without a well-defined purpose, your social media strategy for small business could struggle to deliver the desired benefits.

Grow your brand visibility

In a crowded marketplace, standing out is vital. Social media offers a perfect digital soapbox for SMBs to stand on and amplify their brand's voice. By embracing a [social media strategy for small business](#), you can extend your reach far beyond traditional marketing methods. The shareability of social media means your content pertaining to your brand, products, or services can be seen by people in places you never thought possible. Small business owners can enjoy tools to boost their brand using visual, image-based content and video that could raise their online profiles.

Build your KLT

Social media has the potential to help humanize your brand, which is important for building your KLT (Know, Like, Trust). People can follow, respond to and buy from companies they get to know, like and trust. Sharing photos, videos or even your thoughts allows people to see the faces and personalities behind the company. (Pro tip: make sure you have a person's consent before you post a picture of them. Don't assume they won't mind.) Small business social media marketing using digital platforms is ultimately critical for today's businesses to build customer visibility and trust. Each platform provides unique ways to communicate, interact and engage with customers and followers. These interactions, when managed purposefully, can help turn casual followers into dedicated brand advocates. By consistently projecting a well-defined brand personality and voice, you can create an environment where customers know exactly what to expect from your business.

Reach global audiences

With social media's global footprint, brands can gain recognition both locally and globally, offering myriad opportunities for potential growth. It can open doors by reaching a global audience. Positive online exposure can help increase sales and gain insights into different markets and industry experts. Moreover, being active on social media can help keep your brand relevant by allowing you to stay on top of trends and consumer preferences.

Organic reach for greater results

A well-curated social media strategy for small business can attract and engage followers without the need for expensive marketing campaigns. Video content, in particular, can be highly effective at boosting engagement and it doesn't have to come with a hefty price tag. Consider how you might use your existing resources to build content that can boost your social media presence.

Which social media platform should you choose?

There are an endless number of social media platforms, and each has its unique strengths and caters to different audiences. Understanding these differences can help you select the platforms that align best with your brand's personality and what business goals you want to achieve from your social media marketing. Here, we focus on Facebook, Instagram, X and LinkedIn—though others, like TikTok, YouTube and Pinterest, could potentially play a role as well.

Facebook

You can't get much bigger than this for a social media network. As one of the original social media platforms, it is estimated to have over 2.96 billion monthly active users (MAUs). It has always been a community-centric platform, which could make it effective for businesses looking to build loyal followings around their brand.

Top tips:

- Ensure your business page is inviting and fully updated with accurate contact information, business hours and a compelling description of what your business offers. There are different rules for business pages than personal pages so make sure you're employing the appropriate interface.
- Comments are a big deal. Regularly interact with your followers by responding promptly to comments and messages—engagement is key to building a loyal community.
- Take advantage of Facebook's targeted advertising options to reach specific demographics and drive traffic to your website or physical store. There are costs involved when advertising on Facebook, of course. More information on pricing and terms are available on Facebook.

What is Facebook great for?

Facebook is great for brands that provide services, particularly local businesses, as previous customers may agree to contribute testimonials, photos, or videos related to their experiences. For example, a local construction company might utilize Facebook to share recent projects, tips or behind-the-scenes content. It's also a fantastic tool for real-time customer service conversations or product sales, given the potential for linking to your own store or using the Facebook store.

Instagram

Instagram is famous for its visually driven platform, making it ideal for businesses looking to show off their products or services through images and videos. It has over 2.35 billion MAUs and tends to attract a young adult audience. Instagram can be a good platform for businesses that want to build a strong visual identity and engage with a trend-savvy audience.

Top tips:

- Instagram Stories can help you remain “top of feed, top of mind,” while Reels is an excellent functionality to showcase organic content. To increase your company's or brand's following, show the human side behind your business by creating engaging posts or short videos.
- Use relevant or trending hashtags to increase the discoverability of your posts, making it easier for potential customers to find your content.
- Consider collaborating with online influencers to help reach a larger audience and help build credibility. Some influencers expect to be paid for their collaboration or enter into a formal contract for services. Many attorneys can help prepare and negotiate these kinds of contracts for you.

What is Instagram great for?

There are so many SMBs that can leverage Instagram and it can be highly effective for exciting, fresh, trend-led businesses, particularly those that have visually appealing products. A fashion label can use Instagram to showcase new arrivals, style tips and photos. Also, Instagram is a trove for food lovers. Bakeries, restaurants and sweet treat makers can all maximize this platform to share their creations and get people excited about your brand.

X (formerly Twitter)

X is known for instant information, trending news and fast-paced content. Users can communicate in real time, ideal for businesses that want to engage directly with their customers. X can be particularly useful for businesses that need to respond quickly to customer inquiries and join trending conversations.

Top tips:

- React and respond promptly to mentions, retweets and direct messages, which shows your business is “always on” and customer-focused.
- Keep an eye on trending topics and hashtags relevant to your industry. Joining in these conversations may increase your visibility and potentially drive users to your site.
- Maximize your brand's presence and authority in your industry by sharing professional tips and insights.

What is X great for?

X fits a brand that wants to keep on the pulse and has a customer base that wants industry-leading updates. A tech startup, for example, can use X to announce product launches, comment on industry news and engage tech enthusiasts

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the go-to platform for promoting a business's professional side. It offers opportunities for networking, sharing of industry insights, and generating leads. LinkedIn is also highly effective for businesses looking to connect with other businesses, potential clients, and industry professionals. With 900 million MAUs, end users have the potential to build a strong network of executives, decision-makers and opinion leaders.

Top tips:

- Just like a store, a LinkedIn company page profile is more appealing and impressive the more stocked it is. Make sure it's detailed and descriptive with contact information and background.
- Join industry conversations by commenting on peer posts and sharing long-form content, such as articles and industry opinions. This can help establish your business as an authority in your field.
- Participate in LinkedIn Groups relevant to your industry. These groups are often full of potentially useful contacts, partners and influential organization members.

What is LinkedIn great for?

Any SMB can (and probably should) have a LinkedIn profile. It's an excellent way to keep abreast of industry news, events and individuals. B2B companies—a legal firm, for instance—may benefit from LinkedIn since the platform is less geared toward posting quirky videos to attract new customers. They can take advantage of the latest market trends, connect with experts and show the business side of the brand.

Best practices for success with social media

It can be hard to know where to start or what will be a hit with your audience. The beauty of small business social media marketing is there are various types of content that you can try out to see what works. The key is to keep on trying. Here is a quick list of ideas to consider:

- Tutorials
- Product launches
- Company news
- Interviews
- AMAs (Ask me anything)
- Behind-the-scenes
- Events
- Memories (#TBT)
- Quizzes
- Polls

Define your brand voice

A strong and consistent voice sets the tone for your brand. Your voice should reflect your business's core values and unique selling points. Whether your social media strategy for small business is fun and quirky or professional and authoritative, it should be consistent across all platforms. Always be strategic—avoid posting filler. Everything should represent you and your brand.

Determine your frequency

Consistency is key. Don't get discouraged. Keep posting content and see what works—what users seem to gravitate toward most. Depending on the platform and audience, a good starting point is to post one to three stories each week, and more as you get more comfortable with the process or develop more resources to sustain greater frequency. Planning and storyboarding your content ahead of time can help maintain this consistency and ensure that your posts align with your overall brand strategy.

Make use of Stories and other platform-specific features

Facebook and Instagram Stories are quick and easy ways to grab people's attention. There are several types of Stories, whether reposting, creating a Boomerang, running a poll, or talking to the camera. Because Stories appear at the top of the feed, they keep your business top of mind for your audience, improving your reach and engagement. Don't forget to optimize for mobile consumption, as this is where most traffic comes from.

Create engaging videos

Nothing can replace in-person interaction, the next best thing is video, which creates a sense of connection with customers. Whether it's a short clip to build brand awareness or a detailed tutorial, videos can convey your message in a dynamic, personal and engaging way. Aim to create thumb-stopping content that grabs viewers' attention within the first few seconds. Design your videos for both audio-on and audio-off and include clear calls to action (CTAs) to ensure your post gets results.

Here are some different video styles to consider:

- Short-form: Typically lasting around 10-15 seconds, short-form videos are great for capturing attention quickly. These are quick to make and have a high digestibility and shareability factor.
- Long-form: These are around 3 minutes long and provide more detailed information about your product or service. They are good for business interviews on LinkedIn.
- Instagram and Facebook Live: Live videos, which can last 15-20 minutes, allow for real-time interaction with your audience. Use these opportunities to answer questions, host fellow industry leaders or provide a live demonstration of your products.

Driving revenue with social media

One major goal for SMBs when using social media is to drive growth and sales. Consider implementing a simple three-part strategy:

1. Post content: As mentioned above, share high-quality content that aligns with your brand and appeals to your audience.
2. Engage: Interact with your followers by responding to comments and messages and participating in conversations.
3. Convert: Clear calls to action are essential for driving conversions. Don't be afraid to encourage followers to take action, whether it's visiting your website, signing up for a newsletter or making a purchase.

Consider working with influencers

By partnering with influencers who have a large following in your target market, you can build trust with potential customers. Influencers can promote your products or services through a series of posts, stories or live sessions. Depending on your budget, you can collaborate with micro-influencers, who often have a more niche following, or larger influencers who can reach a broader audience.

Measure your social strategy success

You may want to know what numbers to look for when [evaluating the effectiveness of your social media strategy](#).

- Proxy metrics: These include engagement-related metrics such as reach, impressions, clicks, comments, reactions, shares and video views. These metrics provide insight into how well your content is performing and how engaged your audience is.
- Business metrics: These metrics are directly related to your business goals, including traffic to your website, leads generated and sales made. Tracking these metrics helps you understand the direct impact of your social media efforts on your bottom line.

Don't be afraid to ask for help

Managing small business social media marketing can be time-consuming. Fortunately, numerous free tools, like built-in design templates and third-party content creation sites, can streamline the process. Additionally, if budget permits, outsourcing social media management to professionals could free up your resources and bring a more polished approach to your social media presence.

Looking ahead on social platforms and technologies

Keeping your eyes on the horizon for emerging platforms and technologies may be just as important for your business as working with existing structures. This is because new platforms can serve as a blank space with still solid MAU and fewer competitors. They may also help you capitalize at a key moment and reach a new audience.

Emerging platforms

The social media landscape is constantly evolving, with new platforms emerging that offer innovative ways to connect with audiences. Smaller, more niche and connected communities are becoming more prevalent. Staying informed about these new platforms can give your business a competitive edge. Early adoption of a new platform can allow you to build a strong presence before the space becomes crowded.

New technologies

While only playing a minor role in social media so far, the likes of interactive virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are becoming more viable with the release of more advanced and affordable hardware. SMBs can use AR for virtual try-ons or interactive product demonstrations, enhancing the online shopping experience.

Authenticity

The rise of artificial intelligence is making social media posting a lot easier and quicker. However, it comes with its risks. Followers and customers are becoming more aware of AI and can be put off by something that isn't genuine. When the goal on social media is to trust and grow an affinity with your audience by being honest and human, having AI write your posts could end up costing you followers and customers instead.

Key takeaways with social media marketing for small business

Remember, be consistent. Define and project your brand's unique personality and voice, as this is key to building trust and loyalty among followers and gaining more. Stay informed about emerging trends and technologies and be prepared to adapt your strategy as needed to maintain a competitive edge. With the right approach, smart social media marketing for small businesses can help supercharge your success.

Verizon is committed to helping SMBs achieve their business goals with cutting-edge networking solutions and 5G network connectivity. Help empower your small business with the tools and practices outlined in this guide and watch your online presence—and your business—flourish.

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