




# SOCIAL MEDIA

## Getting Started



You're trying to grow your business, and you've reached the conclusion that a stronger social media presence is the way to do it. But where do you begin? Taking that first step into social media can be overwhelming. There are so many sites and platforms, so many users, so much content out there waiting to be explored, where do you even begin?

It's a lot to process. What follows is a quick step-by-step walkthrough for social media marketing for beginners.

### **1.0 Start with your basic objectives for using social media**

Before you can really begin to leverage social media, you need to ask yourself some key questions about why you're doing it. What are you hoping to accomplish? Are you hoping to increase sales, or improve customer service? Or alternatively, are you just looking to create a little more visibility for your brand?

### **2.0 Define your target audience**

As you're developing your social strategy, choosing sites and content strategy, etc, you'll probably be guided by one key question: Who's your audience? This will influence everything. Take your site choices, for example. If you're trying to cater to millennials, you might want to emphasize YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat more than other networks. If you're targeting moms, Pinterest works great. Facebook is broader, appealing to everyone. Which social site is the best match for you? It depends on what your business is trying to accomplish. Research your intended audience before you make any final decisions about where you will focus your social efforts.





### 3.0 Come up with a memorable handle

What's in a name? Ideally, it's one that's catchy and memorable. When it comes to your social presence, you'll want to use the same handle across all of the platforms.

### 4.0 Pick your social channels

First things first: how do you decide where your business needs to be? For the sake of narrowing down where you should spend your time, below is a quick overview of each of the major social platforms. Rather than try to dominate them all, you should consider which platforms make the most sense based on your industry and audience.

**Twitter** - Simple and straightforward, Twitter is a solid starting point for most businesses. Requiring minimal setup and providing a place to go back-and-forth with followers directly.


**Facebook** - Undoubtedly the biggest name in social, Facebook is somewhat of a mixed bag for business. The platform's recent algorithm change has made it difficult for some businesses to grow their Pages and stay in touch with fans consistently. That said, Facebook's ad platform is the gold standard for social media ads if you're interested in paid promotions.

**LinkedIn** - a network laser-focused on business trends and networking. Although most business profiles primarily belong to startups, LinkedIn is a goldmine for anyone networking in the B2B space. Looking to get in touch with an influencer, marketing manager or CEO? Chances are you can find them here.

**Instagram** - At its core, Instagram is a network centered around visual content. A major hub for brick-and-mortar businesses, ecommerce shops and influencers alike, the platform encourages brands to get creative. From eye-popping photos to clever captions, it's all about finding unique ways to show off what you're selling.

**YouTube** - Considering that video represents the top-performing type of content across nearly every social networking, YouTube is a great place to house your videos if you're already producing them.





## 5.0 Complete your profile(s)

Among the most important social media marketing basics is the need to fill out your profile 100%. Not only does it make your profile look more professional, but it also makes your business easier to find.

## 6.0 Get the cadence right

One of the key questions guiding your social efforts is this - how often will you post on your social sites? Is once a week enough, or do you need to do more? The answer? It depends on which sites. A good rule of thumb is if you're writing in-depth blog posts with a lot of words, once or twice a week is probably fine. On sites like Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, where people follow a lot of content from a great many people and brands, you'll need to step it up to 3-5 posts per week. On Twitter, where volume is king, you can do more. Several tweets per day is acceptable.

## 7.0 Have a schedule, but show flexibility too

Once you've figured out how many times to post on your social sites, the next question is when. Timing your social posts is part science and part art. On one hand, there are certain optimal time slots - people love to browse social media sites during their lunch breaks and in the evenings after work. But if you adhere to a rigid schedule just to hit those sweet spots, you'll start to seem too automatic, like a robot. You'll want to mix it up for variety's sake.

## 8.0 Develop a content calendar

Plan and organize your upcoming content. Maintaining a content calendar lets you plan ahead, batch your work, avoid multitasking, and note down all your creative brainwaves for later.

## 9.0 Identify content categories

For example a fitness business would stick to these: Tips, Tutorials (how to...), Nutrition (what they should eat and drink before, during and after exercising), Motivational (quotes etc), Benefits (of working out at home etc). You can draw from these categories and schedule them in your calendar and decide how to present them, whether they should be videos, photos, graphics, infographics, links to articles etc.





## 10.0 Develop a consistent 'look & feel'

Be consistent in your use of filters, tints, vibrancy, contrast, saturation etc. and create a visual style that makes your brand recognizable every single time.

## 11.0 Use the right tools

Scheduling: You might need to use some kind of tool for coordinating all of your social efforts. Investing in a social media management platform – say, an application like Hootsuite , Sprout Social or Sendible will give you a convenient centralized dashboard. This way, all your social media logistics will be viewable on a single screen. There are a number of social management platforms available – research and select the one that is right for you.

Graphic Design: Canva <https://www.canva.com/>

Storage and File Sharing: Dropbox <https://www.dropbox.com/>

## 12.0 Pay attention to your Analytics

Track your results so that you can identify the most effective strategies.

### ***And finally...***

There is not a magic formula, that I've found anyway. Social media is an ever-changing and fast-paced landscape. The best thing you can do is to TRY different things and pay attention to the results. Then keep doing what works. It's that simple.

Good luck!

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