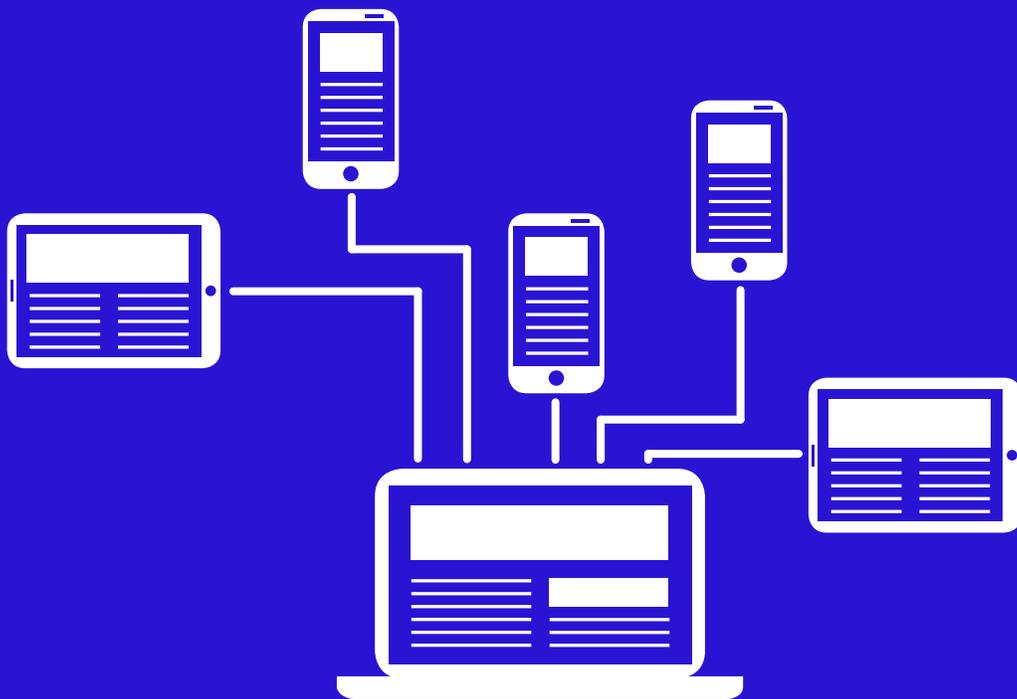


FLYCASTMEDIA

THE LOCAL BUSINESS GUIDE TO **SOCIAL MEDIA**



WELCOME TO **THE LOCAL BUSINESS GUIDE TO SOCIAL MEDIA**

Welcome! We are so glad you've dropped by.

Whether you are new to social media or just want to pick up a few tips to fill in your knowledge, you've come to the right place. You will have heard that social media is essential in modern business nowadays. It isn't just the big guns who can make their mark in social media, small businesses can too. If you are thrilled about it, or filled with fear and dread, there is no way around the fact that social media is more complex than it seems to be at first. Setting it up for your own business can be a bit overwhelming, and building up a network can be a big job, which needs suitable skills and knowledge, but this guide will help you with pointers on where to start off and the direction to take. There is plenty here to improve your social media presence. Let's get going.

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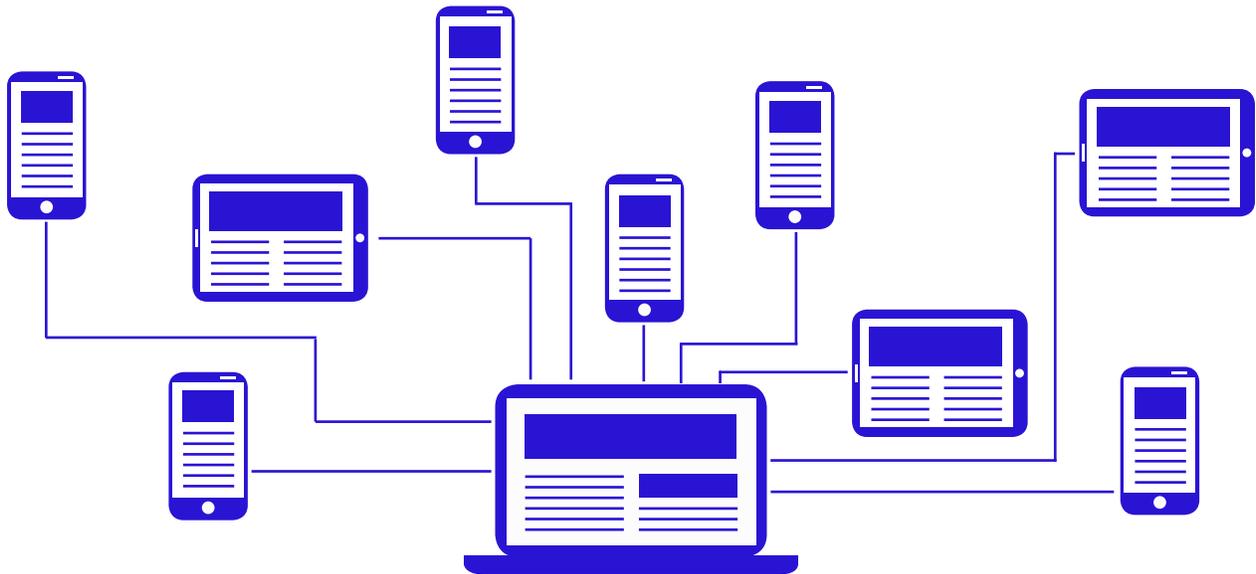
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JUST WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA?

“Social media” is a way for people to interact online. While it’s been around since the start of the World Wide Web, around 1989, in the last decade or so there has been a great increase in the number and popularity of social media sites. It’s called **“social media”** because users engage with it in a social context, which can cover ordinary conversations, commentary on on-line content, photograph and video sharing, and other user-generated interactions. There are some business-orientated media sites too, of course. Examples of social media websites are: Facebook, Twitter, Google+, YouTube, Pinterest, and there are many others worldwide. LinkedIn is aimed more at networking business users.

Publishing web content has become much simpler over the last few years, and has helped the use of social media grow enormously. Web users who are not technically minded are able to easily create content on a rapidly-growing number of platforms. These include hosted communities, blogs, social networks, and third-party communities.



For businesses, the rise of web-based consumerism and use of social media brings opportunities and responsibilities. Consumers share a huge amount of data through social media and this can make web marketing very easy. The real magic lies in the opportunity to grow enduring relationships with your customers through social media. This is where online responsibility comes in. Just as customers' behaviour has changed, so have their expectations of YOUR behaviour. Customers are having conversations about your business whether or not you are listening and joining in. It's so much better to join in these conversations.

IS SOCIAL MEDIA JUST A FAD?

The short answer is NO.

Over the past few years, there has been an explosion of growth in popular social media platforms, both in the number of sites and their memberships. It is safe to say that the social media era is just getting started, and the need for social media in business is due to become stronger over time. The whole world has seen the impact of the expansion and adoption of social media tactics, and the rising growth statistics speak for themselves.

WHY DOES MY **COMPANY** NEED **SOCIAL MEDIA**?



No matter the size of your business, even small and local, statistics show one message: **your customers are online**. They use social channels to chat with their friends and colleagues, and contact other brands when searching for information, recommendations and entertainment. If your business is not around to answer them, a competitor will be and may quickly take your customer away from you, along with anyone else who is listening to the conversation.

There are many opportunities to please your customers, and making that connection can build a person's relationship with your company, brand name, or representative online. Those relationships create a foundation for what can become a fantastic marketing asset – customer advocacy. This is where a customer acts as your company's advocate amongst their peer group. Think of Apple "fanboys" as an example. They stick up for Apple and its products online with comments in forums, on news articles, and elsewhere.

When you find yourself stuck in a rut with a problem, your advocates will help remind the rest of the world who they're loyal to. Advocacy isn't something that you can buy or stumble upon. Advocacy is earned over time through positive and continuous engagement with your customer base. Advocacy is gained through experiences that please your customers, and through the delivery of the highest class of customer service.

Advocacy is the pinnacle of social media. It is through advocacy that your efforts start to scale up and grow. It shows that your brand is doing such an amazing job that it makes your customers shout about your brand from the rooftops, sharing their opinions and experiences with their networks. That experience sharing is the best marketing a brand can get.

Identifying potential advocates is a good first step. You can use social tools (many of which are explained in this guide later on), site data, customer data, and your own observations to help you pick out which customers are likely to work for your brand. You need to work out what is important to those potential advocates. What do they want? Do they want recognition? Are they interested in exclusive access to news and/or content? You need to find out the types of advocates that your brand attracts, and find ways to recognise and/or reward them for their advocacy. You need to remember, though, that most of your greatest social relationships will be built organically. While your research and brand knowledge encourages people and helps you put the right foot forward, relationships take time to develop.

The transition from a passive web to an interactive web has brought with it many changes affecting how individuals connect with one another and also how businesses operate. At this stage in the game, it's fair to say that a web presence is critical to the success of a business. You won't achieve much when you're ignoring your customer's conversations online. Use this opportunity to get closer to your audience than ever before: reach out to people in a genuine and authentic manner; increase the authority of your brand; engage the people who influence your customers' behaviour; drive more qualified site traffic; and gain the data necessary to make insight-based business decisions.

HOW CAN **SOCIAL MEDIA** BE A **SPRINGBOARD FOR SUCCESS** IN OTHER MARKETING CHANNELS?



Please remember that neither your customers' experiences with you nor your brand starts with your website blog, your Twitter feed, or your Facebook page. They have probably first of all visited your store and bought one of your products. Social media should take your existing brand and make it feel robust and real, and build it up. Your social media efforts should be an extension of everything else you do across your company, in all departments. Capturing your company's voice and sharing it through social media will open up opportunities in other channels of marketing, including branding, public relations, SEO, sales, and more.

RELATIONSHIPS

To get the most out of social media, make the relationships you build with it your end goal. That might sound a bit idealistic for anyone who is grounded in more traditional and tangible business measurement and metrics. Take a step back, however, from the bottom-line, return-on-investment-seeking aspect to look at the big picture for a minute. Customer relationships are the foundations upon which other aspects of your business can and will grow.

Relationships develop when you cultivate them, and no other area offers you the opportunity to do this as well as social media. Social channels have broken down the walls between individuals at an unprecedented rate.

In 2011, Facebook released data showing that its users had, on average, just 3.74 intermediate friends separating one user from another. This **concept of “degrees of separation” has been around since the early 20th century** and many people have tried to measure what the actual average number of links is between any two people on Earth – with Facebook data, it has become simpler. Researchers from the University of Milan in 2011 analysed 721 million Facebook users and their friend networks. They found that 92% of people are linked by four intermediate friends and 99.6% of users are within five friends apart.

In the years since those Facebook studies, the network has only continued to grow. That is incredible, and social media can take the credit for making it happen.

Some of the most successful public relations and SEO professionals earn their reputations, at least in part, from the relationships they are able to build. They are also excellent at what they do - of course - but great relationships bolster their solid efforts. The relationships you build with your customers lead to loyalty and advocacy, which are traits that can support your brand during both the good and the bad times. This represents an investment that will remain strong on nearly any platform and under nearly any circumstances.

FEEDBACK

Information can be shared through social media at an incredibly fast rate, and users are increasingly turning to social channels to share information in real-time. This information often takes the form of opinions, so if you're listening for the right cues from your audience, social media can become an invaluable source of insights and feedback. Incorporating social listening into product development work can act as an early-warning system, save on customer-service costs, provide useful development feedback, and help identify ideal product testers (if you need them) without much expense.

INTEGRATION

Social media is not something you simply add-on to the rest of your marketing, branding, PR, and advertising efforts; it needs to be fully integrated into all of your marketing efforts. In doing so, you can create a joined-up experience for your customers. Think of it as a means to an end, and not an end in itself. It isn't as hard as it sounds.

Integrate social media into your marketing efforts as early as possible to help amplify and solidify your work rather than waiting until the end of the planning cycle to explore social options. If a social presence is clear from the start, your branding will benefit from additional customer touch-points, PR will see an increase in reach, and customer services can proactively listen and activate where necessary.

As you can see, a social presence can have a far-reaching impact for your organisation when it is executed in a thoughtful manner. If you make social engagement a core part of your operations rather than an afterthought, you have a better shot at leveraging its power fully.

HOW MUCH OF THIS **GUIDE** SHOULD I READ?

There's more to social media than often meets the eye. You may have already got that point. While this guide is designed to be helpful no matter how much you read, we recommend going from cover to cover. Although every section might not apply to your social campaigns now, you'll gain a deep understanding of the parts you might want to implement later. You will be well-poised to create the most effective social marketing strategy you can.



face book

FACEBOOK

[Facebook began in 2004](#). It started as a social network for college students, and has grown in size to have over a billion active users across the world. On its own, it has shaped the view of many people on how social media should operate. Did you know that it is now used by a large number of businesses to connect to their consumers and users? This chapter explains how to go about using a business page and what you can do with it.

HOW DO PEOPLE USE **FACEBOOK**?

From the start, Facebook became an important part of people's online presence. **For many users, Facebook is the ONLY social network that they use.** Facebook allows people a wide variety of options to limit or expose themselves to online scrutiny. Some users are almost invisible, as they have stopped sharing almost everything. Others allow themselves to be more open online and share everything they post. Some people check into Facebook a few times a week while others are online whenever they can. The driving force to using Facebook is connection: connecting with colleagues, friends, old-school mates, and for an increasing number of users, even professional connections.

Facebook has features that go beyond an individual user's page to business (or brand) pages, events, groups, and a new messenger service.



BUSINESS PAGES have changed a lot since Facebook introduced them, though they are fairly stable today. Like other types of pages, the features have kept evolving as they add more to meet the needs of the marketers behind the brands. Facebook has recently added extra analytics, reporting, security, and access controls, as well as increased the options available to those wishing to use Facebook advertising.



GROUPS are user-created and have varying levels of privacy and security, a lot like individual user profiles. Users can organise groups around any topic or event they like. From professionally relevant groups to those organised around special interests, such as book clubs, the variety is limited only by interest of the users.



EVENTS (or calendar) allow users to organise around things happening at points in time. Security here is quite customisable, allowing for public, private, and somewhere-in-between events. A key feature here is the in-built ability to export your Facebook events to other calendars, which increases the usage and reliance on this feature which mixes users' personal and professional lives.



FACEBOOK MESSENGER is a way of combining email, instant messenger, and Facebook messages. Facebook took the opportunity in 2011 to acquire one of the more popular group-messaging apps called Beluga, run by former Google employees. It has since been re-branded as "Facebook Messenger". On iOS, Blackberry, and Android devices, this is a stand-alone app, but it also integrates across the Facebook app and web experiences.

As users increasingly rely on social networks, they will respond and grow as Facebook has. While there's still a great deal of opportunity in this space, Facebook offers users the most choice for many facets of their lives, whilst still enabling great flexibility for privacy and visibility. As users continue to adopt new behaviours and, ultimately, expectations, Facebook continues to adapt, so expect continued change and evolution. This change is necessary and beneficial, but can be frustrating from a business marketing perspective.

SUCCESS STRATEGIES AND TACTICS



As more people and brands jump onto Facebook, the level of “noise” perceived by individual users increases. Facebook’s “News Feed” algorithm helps the noise level by showing users what it deems the most relevant content. In order to truly stand out from the crowd, brands need to add value, be remarkable and interesting. In order to ensure your content is seen, you’ll need to optimise how you use Facebook, and take Facebook-specific functionality into account.



CONTENT: Everything you post on Facebook is “content”. As we know from the News Feed algorithm, how users interact with that content is important. You need to consider every piece of content you post as an opportunity for increased and specific engagement - don’t be afraid to have a little fun. Take a look at this example from Mars Bar (<https://www.facebook.com/Marsbar>). They are completely on-brand, but you will see they are a bit unexpected and show they are unafraid to reveal their human side. Images are also incredibly effective on Facebook—posts with photos getting, on average, 39% more engagement.



WHEN YOU POST: Related to the ingredients of your content is when you should post it. You need to know what times of day your fans are most active. Focusing your engagements during these times will help you grow your fan community. Also be sure to pay attention to things like sentence structure, phrasing, and the types of posts that are particularly engaging to your audience. Many Facebook users check the site on their lunch breaks, and after dinner. While the latter is outside of normal business hours, it is worthwhile testing to see if that's a time when your audience is looking for content.



MODERATING USERS: Brands do have some responsibility for user-generated content posted on their walls or in comments. You'll need to think proactively through your approach to "inappropriate" content on your Facebook page, and best practice would be to make your "rules" publicly available. This lets your community know what you will and won't allow, lessens the chance of a surprise, builds a sense of safety, and sets expectations.

Facebook is an open and public space, so you won't be able to control everything people say. Occasions when it is advisable to remove user content include: harassment and abuse; derogatory or offensive language; threatening posts; advertorial content; and posts that contain sensitive information such as credit card numbers and addresses. Occasions when you should address the comments instead of removing them include: critical statements; negative commentary; and customer complaints. You may not always like what people say, but in social media, you do always have to listen.



JOIN IN CONVERSATIONS: Because you are building something rooted in relationships, you should join in conversations with your customers. They want to interact with your brand, and are going out of their way to do so. You should respect that. The type of conversation will dictate the cadence and rhythm of your response. This is largely dependent on your product as well; for example, an airline's response rates to customer service issues ought to be rather quick, as their customers' needs are likely far more time-sensitive than those in another industry. Only you can determine what is right for your organisation and product, but at least in the initial stages of building a community, it's better to give fast responses.



BUILD A COMMUNITY: You should strive to make your audience's experience on Facebook about their experience and their connections rather than your Click-Through-Rates and your conversion rates. Concentrate on them, and you'll succeed. Your audience will turn into a community that grows, thrives, and supports one another. By enabling engagement within the audience, you can help increase the level of stickiness and affinity they will have to your brand, moving toward customer advocacy.



USER FLOW: While the page environment Facebook gives brands is mostly set, you want to make sure you're directing your users where you want them to go. If I am a user looking for support or help, will I know where to go? Just as you do when designing landing pages for your website, consider the goals of your Facebook page. What do you want users to do when they land on your page? What information do they need to be able to access easily? Make sure these elements are front and centre. You can easily change the order of the apps and even optimise the icons used to display those apps for visibility.



BE CREDIBLE: A huge part of your brand is built on trust, and the foundation of that trust is your credibility. Grammar and spelling are universally important, and you should make a real effort for their correct use. Fact-check sources and news before you share them on your network. Ensure the safety of your users by not sharing links to malicious sites. Essentially, make sure you don't give your community a reason to believe you are anything other than what you are.

WHAT SUCCESSFUL PAGES LOOK LIKE

There are millions of companies using Facebook to showcase their brands and interact with their communities, but a few stand out above the crowd. Take a look at how these companies operate in the Facebook marketing space:



The **Our Land** Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/ourlanduk>) is a page for a company offering holidays in National Parks. They include pictures of the scenery around their holiday homes, surveys with prizes, and discounts for booking holidays where someone else has recently cancelled.



The **Avon UK** Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/Avonuk>) is a page that company reps and customers can both visit to get news about Avon and its products, highlights their makeup, tips on applying makeup, women's issues, clothes, and exercise.



The **Kit Kat UK** Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/kitkatuk>) is full of amusing adverts for the chocolate bar, including their latest TV ads (via Youtube links) and lots of competitions, pictures and stories.



Chocolate for Breakfast is the business page for Sue Ann Gleason, a culinary nutritionist and marketing strategist. (<https://www.facebook.com/chocolateforbreakfast>)



Honda UK (<https://www.facebook.com/hondauk>) has filled its Facebook presence with adverts for their cars and left plenty of space for fans to post photos and stories of their first Honda vehicle.



Skoda has plenty of country-specific Facebook pages such as one for the UK (<https://www.facebook.com/Skoda.uk>) to promote their range of great cars. It contains a brochure interface to provide basic information about each car.

ETIQUETTE **TIPS** AND **GUIDELINES**

Like ordinary face-to-face social interactions, Facebook has its own set of unwritten rules for users to follow. Facebook is, firstly, a social network built to help users stay connected with one another. It has also evolved into a platform for businesses to engage with their customers. This hierarchy is important to keep in mind, and means that you must know the ropes before diving in. Here are a few tips to get you started with proper Facebook etiquette:



DON'T SPAM: This is a big NO throughout all of marketing. Always be tactful, classy, and do not spam. This includes sending mass-event invites and messages and invitations to like your brand pages from your personal account. It's not impossible to spam as a business page, but Facebook's functionality prevents most of it.



RESPONSE TIMES: These are going to vary based on the issue and the product in question, but in social media, timeliness is critical. Users expect things to happen much faster on social channels than on more traditional web channels like email. In most cases, same-day responses are required. Don't ever let your community feel like they've been forgotten.



DO NOT POST CLUSTERED UPDATES: With the notable exception of image albums, avoid making multiple updates within a short time span. Beyond News Feed algorithm concerns, it's just annoying to your followers. Your signal-to-noise ratio falls, and you may lose the long-term attention of your audience.



USE @NAME TO LINK TO A USER: If you want to identify another public Facebook page or user, you can directly link to their Facebook page, which also notifies them that you're talking about them, by putting an @ and then typing their name. Facebook will help your selection with a drop-down list. This also makes it clearer who you're addressing. Note that private users can't be called out in this way unless you're replying to a comment they left on your page.



HIGHLIGHT IMPORTANT POSTS: If your brand has some very important updates, e.g. special sales promotions, or a feature in news articles, you can highlight them in your page's timeline. This expands the post to both columns, and may get these important updates further into people's News Feeds.



MESSAGES: People can send your page private messages. You'll find that most of these messages will be customer service-related, so make sure to check them. The messages section functions like an email inbox.



NOTIFICATIONS: The notifications box will show you the most recent likes, comments, wall posts, etc., on your brand's page. Depending on the volume of incoming activity, this administrative section can be useful when tracking activity by your community. Due to Facebook's focus on recent activity, you'll probably only receive comments and likes on recent posts, but the notifications can help track activity on older posts.



PAGE FAVOURITES: You can mark other brand pages as favourites on your business' page. This is a helpful way to promote partners, good causes, or others you're connecting your business with.



POSTING: While many social media tools allow you to post from them to Facebook, you'll have the best results by posting directly to Facebook from Facebook itself. Facebook's algorithm is biased toward posts that originate from its own interface. Responses and comment moderation, however, can be done via social management software without issue.



SCHEDULING: Facebook allows scheduling of posts directly in their interface. If you are sharing linked content, this content must already be live on the web, which can be a problem for those scheduling unpublished blog posts or other content. Scheduled posts will appear only to the moderators in the "Activity Log." Keep in mind, though, that engagement is a primary goal, and you'll want to be around for the responses to your scheduled posts.



DO NOT BUY “LIKES”: Some marketing companies offer a service whereby you pay them to add “likes” to your page. This may seem like a quick way of improving the popularity of your page, but it isn't a real sign of your links to **your customers**. Gaining likes without engagement can actually hinder rather than help your Facebook page - that's because as your page receives more likes with engagement, Facebook actually starts spreading your content for you across its platform; receive a lot of likes and no engagement and it actually has the reverse effect.

RECOMMENDED TOOLS



FACEBOOK FOR BUSINESS: This is a helpful portal for business page owners offering support for page creation, ad campaign management, and other platform resources. There are several options for Facebook measurement and deep analytics for your brand pages.



FACEBOOK STUDIO: Facebook recently launched this, which highlights great marketing and campaign work from across its platform. Here you will find examples of great work, case studies, and awards to inspire your efforts.



FACEBOOK PAGE INSIGHTS: (available in the admin panel of any business page): This offers up increasing amounts of data specific to your brand page. This panel tells you about who your fans are, where they're located, and how much they're engaging with your page and individual posts. Much of this information can be downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet for further analysis.



FACEBOOK ADS: If your brand has the resources, you can give your content a boost by buying ads on Facebook. These ads can be fine-tuned to the exact social makeup of your target customers.



FACEBOOK BRAND: Like any good organisation, Facebook has implemented guidelines for using its own brand materials. This page gives you official logos, images, and all you need to know about how to mention Facebook without making Mr Zuckerberg cross.



TWITTER

Twitter.com is a social networking site, where you register an account and enter “tweets” (short 140 character or less entries) for others to read. People can choose to read everything you tweet and this is called “following” you. Each Twitter account is unique and you personalise it with a picture of yourself and a short biography. This can tell people about yourself and your interests. You can choose to follow other people, and this creates your personal “timeline”, along with what you have tweeted. Accounts are not limited to individuals; some are for companies, or fake identities (maybe to make fun of a celebrity).

You can use built-in facilities to find other people who you might want to follow. If you see news articles that have the journalist's name with a preceding @ character – that denotes his or her Twitter account name. Increasingly, companies have taken to Twitter to interact with their customers or potential customers. You will find many accounts for various parts of the BBC, for example, which give you information about what is on the radio, or their latest news headlines or weather forecast, for example. Some companies ask their followers for feedback on the quality of their services.

Twitter updates (tweets) have transformed our access to real-time information. Tweets can be shared by anyone with a phone. The 140 character limit is designed to permit you to update your account via an SMS message. People tweet information about news as they stumble across it, maybe a traffic accident, or an earthquake or other natural disaster in their region, or about a political story significant on the world stage. Depending upon who you follow, you will be kept updated with breaking news wherever you are. Most of the reporting from the Arab Spring uprisings was done through Twitter to begin with.

HOW DO PEOPLE USE **TWITTER**?

Twitter has become a tool for everything from showing off the latest “selfie”, right up to helping overthrow governments. Pop stars like Justin Bieber have millions who follow every message about their lives. Via Twitter, athletes add commentary from the sidelines of sports events and Hollywood increases the drama about the latest blockbusters. Consumers use Twitter to find and share interesting content – maybe tweeting a link to the latest hot YouTube clip about a funny TV advert. For many, Twitter has replaced the use of traditional news media.



Twitter’s most powerful use is **connecting people**, as it is so public. Twitter allows strangers to come together to discuss common interests and ideas, and to participate in wide-ranging conversations about the relatively mundane or the incredibly important. The use of hashtags comes into play here. A hashtag is a word or phrase preceded by the hash (#) symbol, such as #Chocolate or #UprisingInSyria, which helps identify the reason for a tweet or groups tweets together. Twitter allows you to see trending topics and search for tweets containing specific hashtags.

If you join in **Twitter chats** relevant to the interests of your brand’s customers, you will find like-minded people to help expand your network. Save searches for popular hashtags to find people talking about those topics. Use tools mentioned later in this article to find like-minded users. Look at who they interact with and get engaged with those people.

Some users choose to tweet constantly about their day, while others limit their contributions primarily to sharing content. **Your goal is to identify what sorts of users you are looking for and engage with and gain an understanding of how and why they’re using Twitter.** By understanding their reasons for using Twitter, you will be able to target your efforts and content better in meaningful ways.

Twitter access is not limited to use via online browsers. Most smartphones support Twitter apps that make it simpler to use when walking about, maybe grabbing photos to post in tweets.

SUCCESS TACTICS



Your success on Twitter depends on your particular goals for using Twitter, of course, but there are some widely-applicable strategies that can get you onto the right track. By keeping these tactics in mind at all times, you will speed your progress toward your own goals.



BRANDING & VOICE: Being aware of who you are and who you aren't is critical on Twitter. You have just 140 characters to communicate your thoughts, so every letter is important. Your brand and voice have to be clear through every tweet. As you use Twitter more, you will eventually work out how to present your brand. How should you talk? How should you respond to criticisms? How should you share a joke? These questions may seem a bit silly at first, but it's better to answer them now instead of when you create tweets based on how you feel at the time. It is extremely important to have a consistent voice across your tweets if you allow several employees to update your account, as people like to know what to expect in their relationship with you. Consistency over time will help you build trust and confidence with your audience.



FIRST IMPRESSION: You need to ensure your account name and profile comply with your brand guidelines. Think of these fields as your “first impression.” Most BBC twitter account names start with the same letters, such as BBCSport, BBCClick, and BBCNews and this establishes them as part of the corporate identity. Many people will only visit a Twitter profile once to decide whether or not they want to follow you. Your “bio” should be accurate and correct, and your account name and picture branded and appropriate. The “location” you put for your account should accurately reflect where you are. Your follower count may come into play here as well. You should also keep an eye on your follower-to-following ratio as this helps further establish credibility, showing that you care enough to follow your community members back.



USE TRACKING FOR ALL OF YOUR SHARED LINKS: This will help you to better evaluate the success that individual tweets have. Determine the days and times your followers are most active, the types of content they engage with most frequently, and what style/tone of your language seems to appeal the most. From there you can better understand how to share and engage with your followers.



DO NOT BE BORING: There’s nothing worse in Twitter than boring tweets. “Boring” is subjective, of course, but you need to strive to be interesting to your target audience. Tweets that constantly push promotional messaging get old very fast. How do you establish brand loyalty when the only thing you say is, “We are offering 50% off our products today”? There has to be more than that you can say about your business, and if there’s not, you may need to reconsider your organisation’s social media strategy.



ADD VALUE: It’s important to be present consistently, but do not tweet simply to hear yourself talk. Every tweet you send should have its own merits. A good rule is to ask yourself why you would want to see this specific tweet if you were a follower.



BE RESPONSIVE: Owing to the quick pace that Twitter operates at, it is essential you respond to your followers as quickly as possible. Twitter makes it easy for people to find your brand account, and you are going to get many customer service requests that need your immediate attention. If you ignore a critical tweet for too long, you may find that one person's voice is soon repeated by their followers. Don't respond to emergencies or questions only; make sure you also greet people and respond to good things said about your brand. As you grow, you'll have to figure out how to scale, but too much tweeting is a great problem to have.

WHAT **SUCCESS** LOOKS LIKE

Developing hundreds of followers is no small feat and, providing enough value to keep them can be tricky. Companies consistently earning the attention of the Twittersverse are worth keeping an eye on; here are a few examples:



ARENA FLOWERS

This is a UK flower seller, but most tweets are not about flowers. The witty, offbeat humour attracts a lot of followers.



WATERSTONES

Each branch of this bookstore chain has its own account. When I read the story by Waterstones Oxford Street through successive tweets about the secret underground layer designed to help the company take over the book-selling world, I realised that this is not a normal account. It is so funny. It also encourages book purchasing and includes details of special offers.



SOLENT LOCKSMITHS

This is a small business, which offers security advice through Twitter. And they tout for business too. All done in a very gentle way.



HENRI LANSBURY SOCCER SCHOOL

This is an account for a soccer school in Potters Bar. They tweet about team events, photos of games and players, and advertise spare places in various events.

ETIQUETTE **TIPS** AND **GUIDELINES**



Like any social interaction, Twitter has its own set of guidelines to follow to be successful. Here are a few tips to get you started:



DO NOT SPAM: This is a rule for all of your marketing efforts, but it bears repeating here. There are many new accounts popping up with people behind them that have good intentions, but no matter how you put it, spam is spam. Mentioning every person in your feed to draw their attention to a special offer is usually seen as annoying. Be sure to keep your tweets relevant, helpful to followers, and spam-free.



DIRECT MESSAGES (DMS): DMs are great when you need private information, like a postal address. Traditionally, you can DM only people who follow you and vice versa. If you have a verified account through Twitter, you can select a special setting to allow anyone to DM you. However, you cannot reply via a DM unless the person direct messaging you follows you. Never send automated DMs as it's considered spam. Do not send auto-DMs to your followers. Auto-messages aren't engaging, and you aren't really reaching out for relationship building. If you'd like to reach out to every single person that decides to follow you, do so in a personalised and unique way.



USE TWITTER PROFILES: If you're talking about someone who's on Twitter, use their @username. It's just polite, and your followers want to know when you're talking about them, as it's an easy ego boost. This also encourages the people mentioned to share what you've posted or further engage with your community.



@ REPLIES: When you start a tweet with an @username, only people who are following both you and @username will see your tweet. If you want more people to see it, just put a period or other marker in front of the username. You could always just rephrase your sentence to include the @username after the first few words.



HASHTAGS: When you use #hashtags, you can expose yourself to a wider audience. Many people follow conversations using various hashtags, but may not be following you. Hashtags are meant as a shortcut to explain what your tweet contains or to show you're part of a conversation or event. If you are jumping into a hashtag, you should make sure that you're contributing value to the conversation instead of just promoting your business.

Some companies have had bad feedback from purloining a hashtag that was already used for something else. Celeb Boutique, a British online retailer, tweeted to its followers: '#Aurora is trending, clearly about our Kim [Kardashian] inspired #Aurora dress'. This was on the day that someone committed mass murder at an Aurora, Colorado, cinema. It received very bad publicity and a story in the Daily Mail for bad PR.



RETWEET (RT): RTs are a great way to boost your community's members content, make them feel good, and say "you're great!" If there's a link you want to track or a grammar/spelling issues you want to fix before retweeting, you should edit the tweet before posting it. There are two ways to RT, manually or through Twitter's native RT function.



SCHEDULE TWEETS: There are many tools to help people schedule tweets. Some twitter phone apps support this function. Scheduling updates is the community manager's very best friend as you are not always online or otherwise available to update Twitter when you need to. You create the tweet, set the time and date, select the account you want to send it from, and schedule it. Scheduling allows you to publish content when your community's most active.

Make sure to watch your scheduled posts. Scheduling posts can be an incredibly useful tool that allows you to scale your energy. However, pre-scheduled tweets can be detrimental in times of crises, e.g. global disasters, national tragedies, etc. It's important to quickly turn any scheduled posts off even if these crises are not directly related to your brand; global events can erupt, creating an inhospitable environment for off-topic content. Worse yet, your posts may unintentionally become the source of controversy during a crisis.

During the recent horse-meat in supermarket food scandal, Tesco had a scheduled tweet that read "It's sleepy time so we're off to hit the hay. See you at 8am for more #TescoTweets." Thousands of users complained about that tweet, causing Tesco to publish an abject apology.



SHORTEN LINKS: Twitter now automatically shortens your links, but you should consider using a separate shortening service with built-in analytics, as it will allow you to track clicks of your content that don't point back to your own web properties. Bit.ly and Hootsuite are good options.



TWITTER LISTS: Twitter support lists of users and these can help your targeting efforts when you're trying to reach industry influencers or join in conversations relative to your niche. If you're making a public list, remember to be empathetic to people who aren't on it; it's best to stay away from lists that qualify or rate people or their services. Make lists private to avoid this issue.

RECOMMENDED **TOOLS**



HOOTSUITE, SOCIAL ENGAGE, AND SPROUT SOCIAL: These apps allow users to manage Twitter accounts more effectively. With varying degrees of control and functionality, you'll want to take a look around and figure out what works best for your needs and your team. These tools all do essentially the same thing: help you engage, measure that engagement, and interact with your followers on Twitter in ways the web interface sometimes makes difficult.



FOLLOWERWONK: This takes a data-driven approach to measuring an account's audience. This tool helps you identify demographics, growth, interests, what time your followers are most active, and even tells you what audience members you share with competitors. Followerwonk helps you explore the social graph and really understand who Twitter users are.



CROWDBOOSTER: Depending on the size and number of accounts you are monitoring, this can be a free tool. It offers a fast and lightweight view on growth and what's working from a content perspective.



SIMPLY MEASURED: This comprehensive analytics tool allows you to measure follower engagement, reach, growth, and even figure out who your influencers are.



IFTTT: This is short for “If This, Then That”. It allows you to set up rules for your online activity. Essentially, these are macros that work across your social accounts and your website to create conditional triggers for events. This can be helpful for many activities beyond Twitter. An example of use could be that whenever you write a new post on your blog, a tweet is automatically generated to point to it.

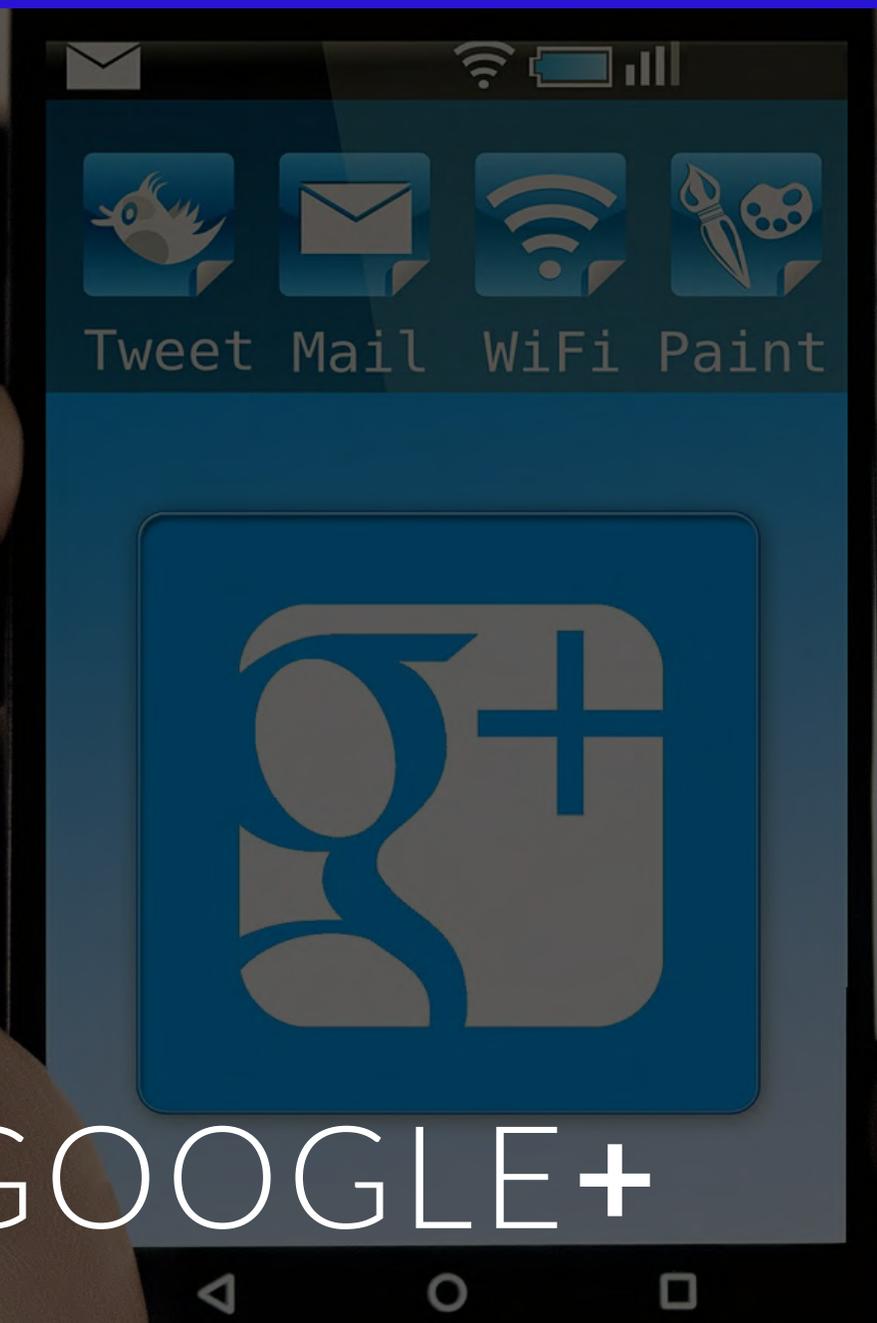


TWITTER FOR BUSINESS: This is Twitter’s one-stop shop for hitting the ground running with your business. It’s a great resource for people just getting started with the platform.



TWITTER CARDS: If you set up your web pages with the right metadata, you can make rich content appear every time someone tweets a link to it. There are currently several types of cards, including templates for articles, photo galleries, apps, and even products.

CHAPTER 4



GOOGLE+

Welcome to our trawl through the social media platforms that can propel your small business to success online. In this, the fourth installment of our beginner's guide, we take a look at **Google+**, the relatively new kid on the social media block. With plenty of actionable points and takeaways, this guide provides everything you need to know to make Google+ a valuable asset for your business online. And, if there's anything else you'd like to know, you can always **get in touch** with the friendly team here at **Flycast Media**.

AN INTRODUCTION TO **GOOGLE+**

Google's social media offering entered the fray back in 2011. In the early days, Google+ was essentially a mishmash of the functionality offered by Facebook and Twitter, with a few unique features such as Hangouts and Circles.

Google+ is unlike other social media platforms, in that, rather than standing alone, it interacts with much of Google's existing infrastructure to connect millions of websites online. One of the most influential drivers for Google+ adoption is its ability to pass link equity to a business' presence online and boost the rankings of your website.

How many people use Google+? Well, there are currently in excess of 300 million active users each month who are responsible for uploading a terrifying 1.5 billion photos every single week.

HOW DO PEOPLE USE **GOOGLE+**?



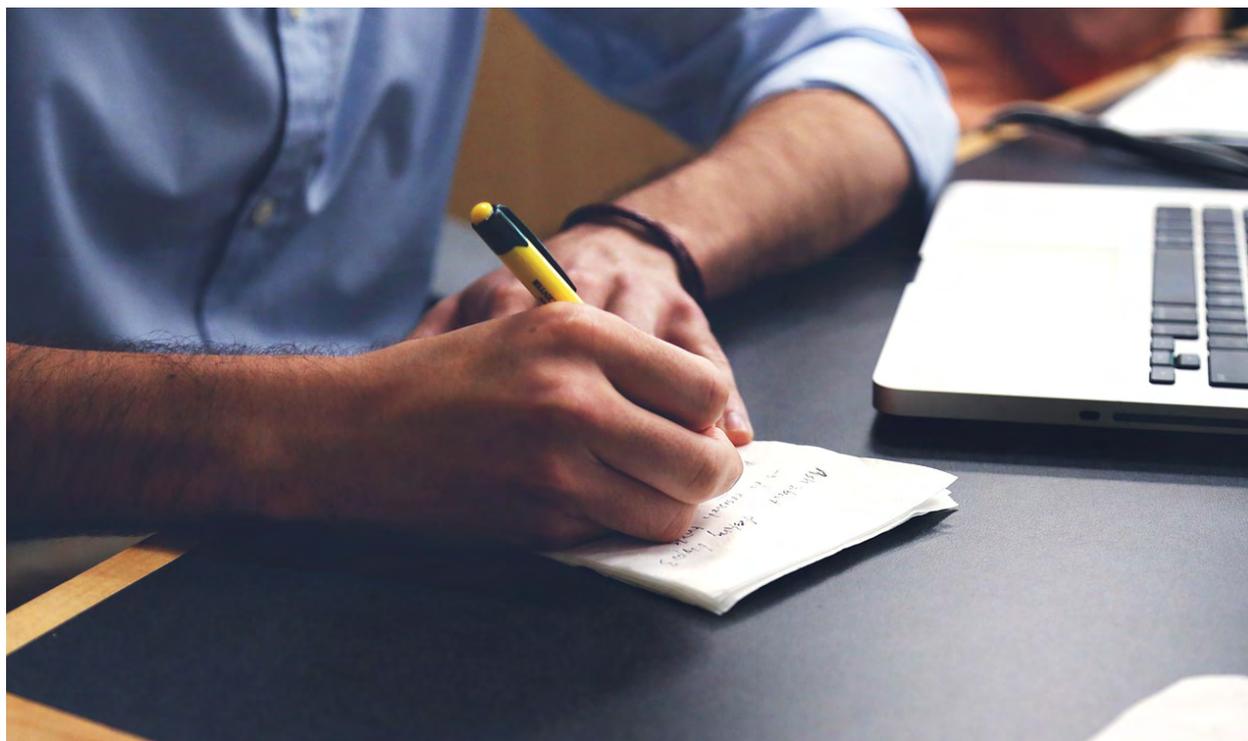
A **gender divide** is apparent on Google+, with a 70-30 ratio of male to female users. In terms of occupation, **the most prevalent group is students**. The majority of the remaining users are made up of tech savvy developers, designers and engineers.

Google has kept much of the information about how people use Google+ to itself. However, as we can see from the demographic above, it is largely tech-driven, with many early adopters still the platform's most active users.

The chief benefit of Google+ over more mainstream social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook is the level of flexibility and customisation Google+ allows. By customising the privacy settings, users can choose to share certain information with professional connections only, while more personal information, like photos from a recent family holiday, can be shared only with friends and family.

Google+ Hangout is another feature that adds some interesting functionality. By 'hanging out' in public or invite-only areas, users can connect with likeminded individuals by voice or video, without having to download any specialist software. Another more recent addition is Google+ communities, which is essentially a replica of Facebook's groups.

HOW CAN **GOOGLE+** WORK FOR YOUR BUSINESS?



As with all the social media platforms, the success you experience on Google+ is largely dependent on your ability to establish and engage an active audience. If your potential customers and clients are not users of the network, you might be able to leverage other users by producing compelling content that effectively sells the benefits of your product or service.

The ability to produce interactive posts and tie your community to a brand page makes it possible to invite users to an event directly. On their acceptance of the invitation, the date of the event will be automatically added to their calendar. The ability to tie your communities to events in this way can greatly increase the engagement and attendance of online or bricks and mortar events.

Of course, as with any social media platform, merely signing up and creating an account does not guarantee success. It's essential you spend time building your Google+ following with regular posts that engage your audience. Any social media campaign should have distinct objectives. Once you have set your goals, you can then formulate a strategy that will help you achieve your objective. Here are a few of the strategies at your disposal:

PROMOTE GOOGLE+ PAGES ACROSS ALL YOUR PLATFORMS

If you already have an active social media following on Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn, or a popular blog or newsletter, you should use these platforms to tell your audience about your presence on Google+. Increasing the visibility of your page will help to establish a readymade community without building it from scratch.

SHARING IMAGES

The Google+ community typically responds favorably to images. If you operate in a sector where an image can tell a thousand words, make sure you post plenty of top quality pics. A good mix of professional photos and some more authentic 'off the cuff' type pics will help to build familiarity, credibility and trust in your business.

FORMATTING POSTS

The way you format your posts is just as crucial as the content itself. A poorly formatted post is unlikely to be read, no matter how earth shattering the content might be. Asterisks * can be used to embolden the elements of your post, like **this**, while underscores are used to italicise particular words and phrases. Also, think of the bigger picture. Paragraph layout and short snappy sentences help to keep your posts to the point.

LEVERAGE THE INFLUENCERS

In any sector, there are always a few key influencers who call the shots online. As Google+ is still a relatively small community, it shouldn't be too difficult to spot the movers and shakers in your business area. Building relationships with these so-called 'authorities' online can help to increase the size of your audience and add instant credibility to your posts.

GOOGLE+ DONE WELL



So what does success on Google+ look like? Well, as with all social media campaigns, it's far easier to gain traction online if you're a well known brand to start with. While there are few similarities between an instantly recognisable brand like RedBull and the vast majority of small and medium-sized enterprises across the UK, there are still plenty of lessons you can learn from **RedBull's Google+ presence**.

As you can see, their branding is incredibly cohesive. Every post, whether it's an image, video or audio track, appeals to a particular demographic. There are actually very few mentions of RedBull products. Instead, they choose to engage with their audience, appeal to their interests and communicate on their level, as a likeminded friend rather than a corporate entity.

King Arthur Flour is an example of a much smaller business flourishing on Google+. Granted it may be an American business, and we all know just how passionate Americans are about their food, but this regional flour company has tapped into the zeitgeist by sharing lots of pictures of delicious recipes and baked goods. It's not exactly an ingenious approach, but it's simple and effective.

GOOGLE+ FINISHING SCHOOL



The way you represent yourself on social media platforms is important, **particularly for business users**. Social media has the power to polarise opinion like no other. You have to earn the respect of your audience before they'll choose to engage with you. Here are a few tips to keep you classy:



TELL THEM SOMETHING NEW

We all have private social media connections we secretly despise. In person, they're genuinely nice people, but online they're opinionated, nonsensical and downright mundane. "Just had the best coffee ever, LOL".

To build a following online, you should add value to your audience. Produce genuinely interesting material. Tell them something new. Google+ allows you to select who you target with particular content, allowing you to send hyper-relevant posts that appeal to specific followers.



ENGAGE AND RESPOND

If you post content on Google+ that receives a response, the last thing you should do is ignore it. By posting on Google+ you're effectively starting a conversation. The opportunity to interact directly with prospective customers is priceless, so address their questions and get involved.



IT'S ALL ABOUT THE TIMING

The timing of your posts is arguably just as important as the content. There are certainly optimum times for posting and only trial error will help you figure this out. If your target market is stay-at-home mums, posting during the day might be the optimum time to reach them, but this is not true of all sectors. Thankfully, there are plenty of third-party tools that allow you to pre-schedule posts. Try **Sprout Social** or **Buffer**.



DON'T BECOME A SPAMMER

If there's one sure way to tarnish your business and alienate your audience, it's spam. Relevancy is essential to legitimate social media posting. If content is not relevant to a particular segment of your following, don't include them in the post. Google+ is blessed with a number of unique ways you can make a nuisance of yourself. Sharing a post directly with a target group will result in a notification being sent to their feed, or worse still, straight to their inbox.

Use these features sparingly, and never be tempted to sacrifice relevance for reach. You'll be surprised just how quickly you can lose all the authority, credibility and trust you've managed to build up.

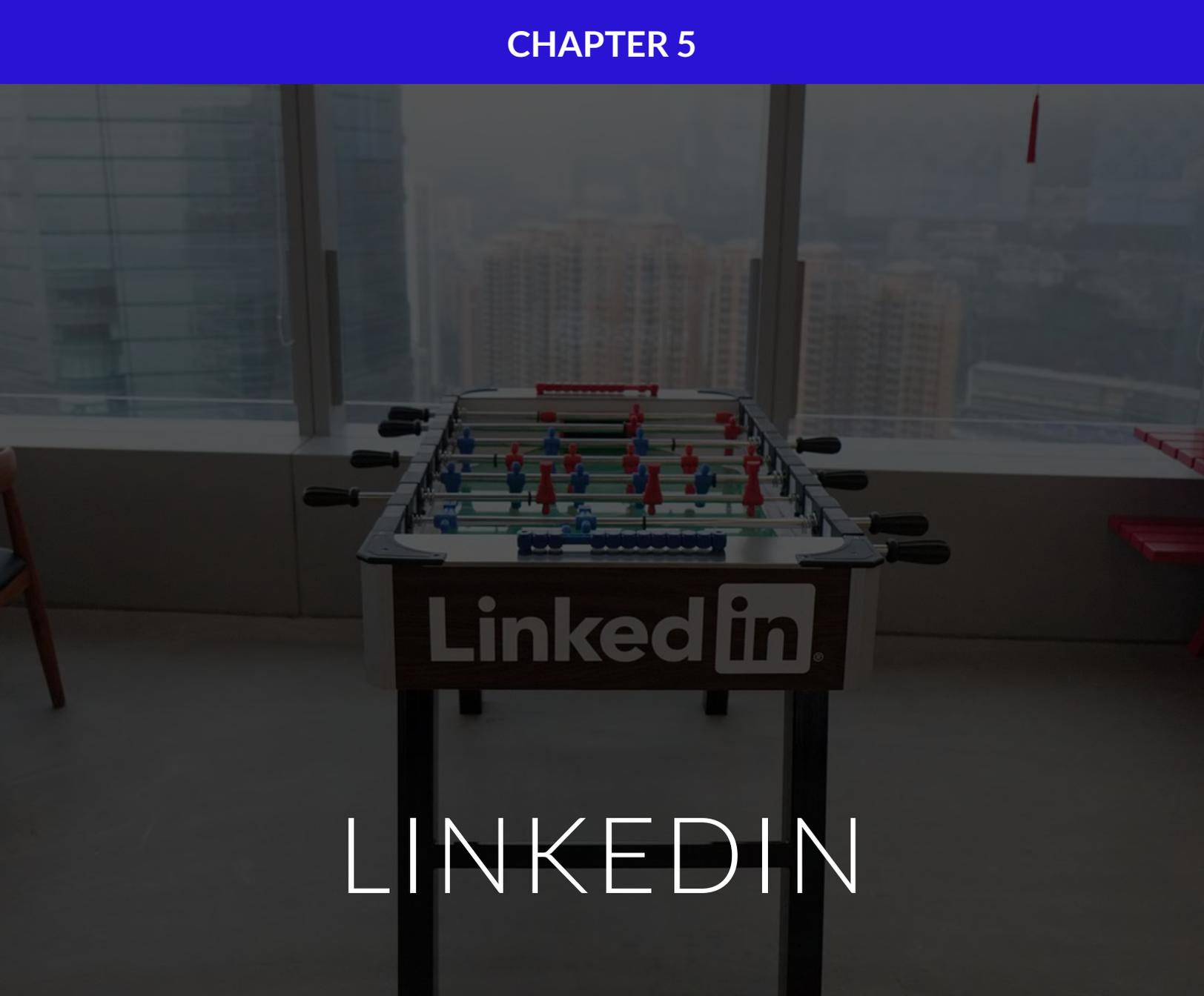


THE +NAME FEATURE

The +Name feature allows you to directly link to another person's Google+ page. This then notifies them that they're being discussed. This is a great feature to use to invite influencers to join a discussion, or by way of a 'shout out' to blog writers or contributors.

DON'T FALL FOUL OF **GOOGLE**

As with all social platforms, there are rules and guidelines which dictate how you should behave. In this case, [Google's Official Policy Guidelines](#) make it perfectly clear what you can and can't do. It's all pretty standard fare, but well worth familiarising yourself with before you start making waves on Google+.



LINKEDIN

Hello social media explorers! Welcome back to our comprehensive tour of the biggest social media platforms. In the fifth edition of our complete social media beginners' guide, we'll be moving on to the web's most white collar platform. [With over 238 million users and more than 50 million endorsements made each week, LinkedIn is an essential social network to have in both your personal and professional arsenal.](#)

Full of easy-to-apply tips and helpful pointers, this guide will get you started on LinkedIn and up to speed in no time. If you have any questions or would like to learn more about any aspect of digital marketing, the team at Flycast Media are always happy to help, just **get in touch!**

AN INTRODUCTION TO **LINKEDIN**

LinkedIn is all about growing connections, becoming a known voice in your sector and earning your place in your industry online. It's a great place for employers to uncover prospective employees, for clients to meet suppliers and for industry leaders to share information and ideas.

Aside from digitally mingling, LinkedIn gives you lots of opportunity to share content, helping you to broadcast and show off your expertise to everyone from competitors to prospective clients.

With 238 million members in more than 200 countries, 78 million unique monthly visits and 3 million company pages; this is a thriving social network. The biggest network developed exclusively for professionals. Interestingly, the largest growing demographic on the network belongs to the students and recent graduates – a clear indication that LinkedIn is the place to be seen and get noticed professionally. So, what are you waiting for?

HOW DO PEOPLE USE **LINKEDIN**?

What do you get when you put your office Christmas party, your industry conference, your address book, your CV and all of the business cards in your wallet into a blender? Well, you'd end up with something very much like LinkedIn.



First and foremost, **LinkedIn is like an online, interactive CV**. It gives you a chance to display your experience and your credentials, then lets you connect with everyone from ex-colleagues and recruitment agents, to the hiring manager at the company you're desperate to get in the door with. You can leave endorsements and recommendations for people you've worked with before and, in turn, they can endorse your skills.

Part hunting ground for recruiters, part stage for you to strut your professional stuff and part networking event, this network is a great place to connect with those you've worked with in the past, build a professional reputation and get talking to people in the professional places you want to go next.

HOW CAN **LINKEDIN** WORK FOR YOUR BUSINESS?



But LinkedIn isn't just great for personal development, it's also a powerful tool for B2B businesses keen to grow their network and get the word out about what they do. Here are a few potential business benefits - plus how to make them work for you...

• LINKEDIN CAN HELP YOU BOOST LEADS

This platform is a great place to generate B2B leads. If you've been trying and failing to get your B2B off the ground using channels like Facebook and Twitter, LinkedIn could be the ideal solution. B2Bs enjoy three times more conversions via LinkedIn. Keen to make this work for you? Try these quick tips:



- Corral your contacts into recommending and endorsing your service
- Make sure you keep your company page fresh and regularly updated
- Consider using the paid for Products and Spotlights service to get more attention

• LINKEDIN CAN TURN YOU INTO A THOUGHT LEADER

A reputation as a leading figure in your sector is worth its weight in gold. If you can earn the attention and respect of others in your industry, you can take your place as an industry thought leader. That's some very good publicity, right there, which can open the door to further PR opportunities. To start developing your reputation:



- Get involved in LinkedIn groups and group discussions using your personal profile (business profiles can't engage like this). Offer advice and guidance to really help others in the forum.
- Add an RSS feed which automatically updates your business LinkedIn with new content from your blog to keep your page looking fresh and authoritative.

• LINKEDIN CAN HELP YOU FIND COMPANY ADVOCATES

No matter how persistently you promote your presence, there's nothing more effective than real recommendations from real clients and customers. For this reason, steer clear of being too self-promotional – this can be off-putting. Instead, make yourself as useful as possible, connect with as many happy clients as you can, scratch their back with endorsements and turn them into your best online asset – company advocates.

HOW TO SUCCEED ON **LINKEDIN**: PERSONALLY & PROFESSIONALLY

If you're using LinkedIn for personal and business use, you'll quickly discover that there's a very big difference between how you run your personal page and how you run your business page. These two sides of LinkedIn are surprisingly different kettles of fish, with their own rules and techniques to take note of. Here's our best practice approach for both...

HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM YOUR **PERSONAL ACCOUNT**



TELL THE TRUTH

It's always tempting to fib on a CV, but this can really come back to bite you on LinkedIn. After all, this network is all about connection – somebody is sure to spot a hole sooner or later. Fill out your LinkedIn personal profile with scrupulous honesty!



REACH OUT

Whether it's been 10 months or 15 years, reach out to everyone you've ever worked with. From a simple "How's life?" to sharing some content you think they'll find interesting, this part is all about building up contacts and worthwhile connections.



GET FOUND

Make your LinkedIn profile as visible and accessible as possible by linking to it from all of your other digital assets. Twitter accounts, blogs, Facebook pages – give your LinkedIn profile a boost through these channels.

Also make sure you link back to these sources from your LinkedIn profile when you post links to blogs to make sure hiring managers and interested parties can see exactly what you've been up to.



BE INVOLVED

There's no point being a wallflower on LinkedIn. You need to get stuck in and get talking to people in groups relevant to your industry and to what you do. Be helpful, be interesting, provoke discussion – just get your face and name out into the industries which matter to you.



SHARE CONTENT

LinkedIn is becoming a better and better place to share and consume content. Be ahead of the curve and start sharing interesting articles and posts with your connections to cement your new, expert reputation and to demonstrate your engagement in the sector.

HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM YOUR **BUSINESS PAGE**



STAY FRESH

Never let your company page get stale. Your business page represents you as a company, if it's been neglected this doesn't look good or bode well. Regular updates will also keep your brand active in your connections' news feeds.



USE LINKEDIN AS A NEWS OUTLET

Big news at your business? If anything important is happening, make sure LinkedIn is updated with the latest. Many searchers use LinkedIn to confirm or deny rumours or get new information. Staying up-to-date will give you authority and show you're on top of any given situation.



BE RESPONSIVE

Unless you've attracted a right old troll, make sure you respond to every interaction. Thank customers and clients for endorsements, return recommendations, reply to questions, offer advice. Just be active and treat all of your contacts like VIPs. After all, the customer's always right.



BE A FOLLOWER

Remember, it's not all about you and your business. Growing a productive, valuable network is all about interacting and growing with others. Follow impressive businesses in your industry, interact with them, share their best stuff with your connections. In the meantime, keep tabs on recent hirings and firings at competitors' businesses – they can speak volumes about new directions!

LINKEDIN DONE WELL

Now you know how to succeed on LinkedIn. But envisioning how this success will work and look can be tricky. Understanding the pay-offs and the incentives is another factor that's difficult to quantify. To help pave your way to social success and to give you a little inspiration, here are a few success stories from brands who have gone big on LinkedIn. As you'll see, it's all about building professional communities...



SAP

These guys have created specialised groups about their individual products and offers. This gives them the power to hold great group discussions – a powerful networking opportunity! With over 300,000 members, SAP have also made use of regular job posts, reaching out to prospective employees and using demographic info to help recruiters find the right people.



BRIDGESPAN

It's all about connecting with non-profits and building relationships with them, Bridgespan has built a whole community on LinkedIn, instead of investing in an external resource. With 9 separate groups catering to different interests, this is a fantastically active LinkedIn community.



TEACH IN AMERICA

This company have a really impressive company page which makes the most of LinkedIn's best features to give their connections the best experience possible. With clear links to essential information, tonnes of resources, regular useful content and a powerful careers section – these guys are doing everything right.

LINKEDIN FINISHING SCHOOL

A lot of LinkedIn success relies on learning as you go. A lot of this platform is about nuance. You need to promote yourself, but you don't want to look spammy. You need to build connections, but you don't want to look insincere. These are tricky tightropes to walk. The best policy is to be as open, interested, engaged and helpful as possible. But there are some clear etiquette tips and tricks to bear in mind as you go:



DON'T SEND OUT A MILLION UNPERSONALISED REQUESTS

A personal touch makes a big difference to people and creates a solid foundation for relationship building. Don't just try to add everyone in a group or click around randomly fishing for connections. Be interested in who you connect with, drop them a line that introduces yourself and explains why you'd like to connect. It'll make a big difference.



USE @ TO MAKE CONVERSATION

LinkedIn doesn't yet have smart user alerts so using @name won't notify users directly, however, when you're contributing to a LinkedIn discussion, using @ will help make it clear who you're talking to and ensure the conversation flows well. It's just good practice.



KEEP A CLEAN HOUSE

You'll want your groups to be as focussed, helpful and spam free as possible in order to get legitimate connections interested in contributing. That means you need to run quality control on your LinkedIn groups. Moderate sensitively and make sure you have clear rules about spam and low-quality posts.



EARN YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations make powerful testimonials for you personally and for your business. Consider asking happy clients or past contacts to leave you a recommendation. Explain why you'd like it – perhaps you have a goal to achieve or a contract to win? This will make them more likely to want to give you a hand! If you're feeling reciprocal, write them up a nice recommendation too!



SHARE SELECTIVELY

There's a fine line between sharing great stuff and bombarding your connections with self-promotional links to your own content. Be selective about the posts you publish on LinkedIn. You don't want to clutter up news feeds and end up hidden.



KEEP CONVERSING

Keen to keep up with the latest conversations in industry groups? Take a look under the Discussions tab for "Latest Discussions" or check out "What's Happening" to stay in the game.



YOUTUBE & PINTEREST

From humble beginnings, **YouTube** and **Pinterest** have risen from the ashes of thousands of failed social media platforms to firmly establish themselves as must-haves for modern businesses.

In the first part of this guide, we'll cast our expert eye towards YouTube to reveal how the video-sharing website has morphed into the world's second largest search engine, and become a springboard for business success online.

As a driver for online culture, YouTube is a reference point for consumers around the world, notching up a brain busting one billion unique users every single month.

INTRODUCING **YOUTUBE**

It's not difficult to see why so many businesses, from one man bands to sprawling global empires, are desperate to try and leverage YouTube's incredible reach to benefit their business. Here are a few stats:

- Over 6 billion hours of YouTube videos are watched each month - almost an hour for every person on earth;
- YouTube is localised in 61 countries and across 61 languages;
- 78 percent of people watch at least one YouTube video every week, while 55 percent watch one every single day;
- Branded video content is watched by 46 percent of all UK internet users. 54 percent of those viewers will click through to the company's website;
- The click through rates of video search results are 41 percent higher than their textual counterparts;
- Online video traffic is predicted to account for 55 percent of all internet consumer traffic by 2016;
- Retail videos on a webpage increase conversion rates by an average of 30 percent;
- 90 percent of online shoppers say videos improve their purchasing decisions;
- 64 percent of viewers are more likely to make a purchase in an online store after viewing a video;
- 40 percent of shoppers visit an online store as a direct result of watching a video;
- Video promotion is six times more effective than print and online.

HOW DO CONSUMERS USE YOUTUBE?



Content is being uploaded and shared on YouTube at record rates. Many users choose to follow particular **YouTube channels** which appeal to their tastes and interests. Over the years, these channels have become increasingly sophisticated. Popular channels can now generate hundreds of thousands of pounds in advertising revenue for filmmakers.

YouTube channels make it easy for private filmmakers and businesses to upload their own content, which can be viewed, commented on, shared and discussed. They can also follow the channels created by other users. This has further boosted YouTube's position as the primary source of entertainment for internet users, while adding to the functionality of this popular resource for online shoppers looking for impartial reviews and branded videos.

THE RECIPE FOR **YOUTUBE** SUCCESS



There's no surefire recipe for YouTube success. However, the incredible size of the user base guarantees that, whatever product or service you offer, there is an audience for it out there. Finding the best way to communicate with your target market is central to your success, so it's well worth taking the time to create a cohesive and engaging content strategy before shooting any video.

Video content on YouTube can take a variety of forms:



CONTENT DESIGNED TO HELP THE VIEWER (HOW-TOS) – For some businesses, tutorials and how-to videos are particularly effective. Creating genuinely helpful resources for your target market can transform your business into an authority online and build that all important trust and credibility. By showing customers how to use your product in a unique way, or simply use it all (e.g. DIY products), you can add value to your offering and establish your YouTube channel as a go-to resource.



EXCLUSIVE CONTENT – One method of creating a loyal customer base while attracting new viewers to your brand is to offer exclusive products or one-off promotional deals to your YouTube subscribers. This approach can help to build a strong sense of brand ownership amongst your followers. Exclusive deals across each of your social channels will also give prospective customers a reason to follow you on more than one platform.



ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION – Once you have established a YouTube following, you might wish to consider incentivising your community to create content on your behalf. By offering a prize for the best how-to video made by your customers, not only can you drive awareness while promoting and increasing engagement; you can also reduce the amount of time you have to spend creating fresh content.

WHAT DOES **SUCCESS** LOOK LIKE?

As with your on- and offline marketing efforts, success is whatever you want it to be. Effective marketing is not all about the direct impact on your bottom line. In some cases, an increase in brand identity, promoting mass engagement or simply attracting inbound links will meet the objectives of a YouTube campaign.



Before you commence your campaign, you should tailor your efforts to meet the particular goals you wish to achieve. You must also ensure all the relevant tracking tools are set up to allow you to effectively measure your success – but there'll be more about that later!

ENGAGEMENT – Promoting engagement on YouTube can be a bit of a double-edged sword. You might think the comments section under each YouTube video would be a prime location for meaningful feedback and engagement, and it can be, but unfortunately the comments section is also subject to spam. Many businesses choose to disable the comments rather than allowing trolls to detract from their content.

Initially, you may wish to leave the comments section open to see the type of response your videos attract. If you do choose this strategy, make sure you keep a keen eye on the comments rather than letting them run free. Engaging with your audience in this way can produce powerful results, so the risks are not without their rewards.

One method of improving commenting on YouTube videos is to link your G+ brand page directly to your YouTube account. YouTube comments are now linked to G+ accounts, so you will be able to see all your comments via this platform.

The first step in this process is to make your YouTube account an administrator on your G+ page. Then, make sure you're logged into your YouTube account and simply follow YouTube's connection instructions.

Once the two accounts are linked, all new comment notifications will appear in G+. Your YouTube videos will also have their own tab on your G+ account, allowing you to manage your video content from one central hub.

HOW SHOULD YOUR BRAND BEHAVE ON **YOUTUBE**?

As with all social media or video platforms, YouTube can damage and benefit your brand in equal measure, so be sure to use it wisely. Here are a few tips to keep your business on the straight and narrow.



ENGAGE RESPONSIBLY – YouTube comments are a dumping ground for some of the less well reasoned arguments your likely to hear. Unfortunately, your brand can be tarnished by the comments your videos attract, so monitor the situation closely. If you are the recipient of spam from trolls, simply delete the comments or disable the section altogether.



COMMENT CAREFULLY – If you are going to post comments on other videos or respond to comments on your own content, remember that you are representing your brand. Comments should be well reasoned, considered and delivered in the brand voice. Spelling and grammar should be faultless, and you should certainly never post any spam of your own.



UPLOAD METICULOUSLY – The act of uploading your video to YouTube is actually very simple, particularly as YouTube accepts every video format you could wish to think of.

When uploading your video, make sure you complete all the relevant sections with information which will appeal to viewers and the search engines. Video titles and descriptions should effectively describe the video's content and compel the viewer to click. They should also contain your relevant keywords.

HELPFUL **YOUTUBE** TOOLS



YOUTUBE ANALYTICS – Gain valuable insight and fine tune your campaign with statistics relating to your engagement and target market.



YOUTUBE ADVERTISERS – This central hub is a potential source of inspiration which allows you to see what other brands are getting up to on YouTube.



YOUTUBE CHARTS – Head to the YouTube charts to see which brands are making the biggest splash online. Sort top videos by views, popularity or comments. This could be a treasure trove of content ideas.

THE POWER OF **PINTEREST**



While moving pictures might attract the biggest number of active users every month, carefully selected static images can help you take the online community by storm. Launched in 2010, Pinterest has gained a firm foothold in the social media sphere for many businesses, but particularly those in the retail and lifestyle sector.

Pinterest is all about selling the dream. It is suitable for soft-sell tactics and specific themes curated around a lifestyle image. Pinterest can also become the window into the soul of your business, showing potential consumers the people behind the brand.

WHAT DO THE **NUMBERS** SAY?

Here are a few statistics to illustrate what a powerhouse Pinterest has become:

- Pinterest attracts more than 50 million unique visitors per month;
- It has 70 million registered users and 20 million active users every month;
- It attracts 5 million article pins per day;
- Online shoppers spend more on their purchases when referred from Pinterest – roughly twice as much as Twitter or Facebook referrals;
- Pinterest drives more referral traffic than LinkedIn, Twitter and Reddit combined;
- Women are five times more likely to use Pinterest than men.

HOW DO PEOPLE USE **PINTEREST**?



Images are an incredibly powerful form of communication, far more than text could ever be. They say a picture speaks a thousand words, and they're right. Scientifically speaking, we are genetically wired to respond differently to visuals than text. Relatively speaking, writing is a fairly new form of communication. Studies have found that while language is decoded in a linear, sequential manner, which takes time, the human brain deciphers images almost instantaneously.

Given the way our brains are wired then, it's hardly surprising that websites like Instagram and Pinterest, which rely solely on images to hook the reader, have established themselves as staples in the digital lives of millions of people worldwide. **Pictures are now being consumed, communicated and shared more voraciously than ever before, enabling businesses to communicate messages about their brand in easy, meaningful ways.**

THE PATHWAY TO **PINTEREST** SUCCESS

Success will not come on Pinterest simply by pinning images in a strategy-less, haphazard way. As with any social media platform, your content strategy is all important. Here are a few ways you can use Pinterest to enhance your brand online:



CREATE A COMMUNITY - Images of customers using your products is a great way to promote engagement. Having their own designs showcased on your Pinterest page will give your customers their own fifteen minutes of fame and enhance the feeling of community.



GO BEHIND THE SCENES - Give your Pinterest followers a glimpse behind the scenes by revealing the people behind the brand. This can add that all important human element to your business.



INTRODUCE YOUR OTHER PROJECTS - Pinterest is the perfect platform to showcase the community or charity activities your business is involved in.



ENGAGE WITH YOUR AUDIENCE - Pinterest is an excellent opportunity for your audience to engage with your business. Encourage this engagement by regularly checking for new comments and responding in a timely, appreciative and thoughtful way.

REPRESENT YOUR **BRAND** IN THE BEST POSSIBLE WAY

There are a few core values that should form the foundation of your Pinterest presence...



ALWAYS GIVE CREDIT – Sharing and sharing alike is at the heart of Pinterest. Giving due credit for any images you share is extremely important. Wherever possible, everything should be pinned from its original source.



WRITE ORIGINAL CAPTIONS – When sharing images on Pinterest, be sure to update the caption from the original source. For an image to properly represent you and your brand, it should feature an original caption which is relevant to your community. Keywords should be used wherever possible to make your images searchable.



KEEP IT CONSISTENT – Little and often is the best bet for pinning images. Pinning a month's worth of images in one day is only likely to frustrate and annoy your audience, so keep them coming back for more with a handful of images throughout the day.



SEPARATE YOUR BOARDS – People will follow different boards for different interests. If you want to share new types of content, create a new board.



VERIFY YOUR SITE - Verify your account. This will allow you to look at traffic levels, referrals to your website and plenty more besides.

HELPFUL **PINTEREST** TOOLS

Need a hand keeping all those pins in check? Here are a few useful tools:



THE PINTEREST BLOG - A valuable resource that showcases a diverse range of users and brands along with industry news.



VIRALTAG - This bulk scheduler for Pinterest allows you to avoid overwhelming your audience by uploading multiple pins at the same time.



POSTRIS - Find the most popular boards, pins and people on Pinterest. Get inspiration and capture the attention of the biggest names in the industry.

AND IF YOU NEED ANY MORE **HELP...**

Just **drop us a line** and the team here at **Flycast Media** will be happy to help you out. We're just nice like that!

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