

Taking your small business social

 By [Carolyn Holgate](#)

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Social media has provided small businesses with the opportunity to market their brands on a big scale at a fraction of the cost. This said, in order for social media to work to your advantage, you need to understand the various platforms and know how to use them effectively to see the benefits for your business.

Make sure the time you spend using social media is time well spent by familiarising yourself with the different social media platforms and devising a solid strategy that will contribute to your business growth, customer engagement or sales support.

Here are a few tips to help you along the way:

Engaging content

While social media can benefit your business, posting anything and everything on your social media platforms may well turn potential and existing customers away. When you engage on social platforms, you must be mindful that you are entering an open community that is bombarded with information. Keep your content relevant to your area of business, current and around topics that are likely to be of interest to your target audience.

Less is more

Think quality not quantity. Your fans and followers would rather read two good Tweets a day than two hundred bad ones. Don't post for the sake of posting. If you continually bombard your fans and followers with information, they will most likely unfollow you.

Choose the right platform

The "big five" of social media are Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and Pinterest, but not all of them may be suitable platforms for your business. If you are a legal advisor, for instance, LinkedIn is a great space for you to interact with other people in your industry, and share your contact details with potential clients. However, as a legal advisor, it makes little sense signing up to Pinterest, which is more suited to a lifestyle brand. Before embarking on a social media strategy or campaign, ask yourself which platforms your target market are likely to be using and which platforms your target markets would most expect to engage with your business on, and focus on these.

Consistency is key

When using social media, remember that your target audience may well be engaging with your brand across more than one of the social media platforms. Ensure your brand voice and key messaging is consistent, no matter whether you're using one, two or three of the "big five". Consistent key messaging and brand tone will help your target audience to quickly identify your brand, and better understand its personality and positioning.

Get analytical

You may think measuring the success of social media requires little expertise, but this is not the case. If you want the best results from your social media campaign or strategy, you need to analyse the results of your efforts properly. Google Analytics and Facebook Insights are two free tools with which you can track your progress. These tools will allow you to determine how many people you are interacting with, what content is best received and the growth of your fan base. The great thing about Google Analytics is it's a simple three-step process - setup your analytics account, identify your main

traffic sources and create advanced segments that will allow you to compare and see the difference of your user's interaction.

There are also many paid for analytics platforms. Using these analytics tools will help you improve your strategy by showing you your social media strengths and weaknesses.

Interact with others

In order to get more followers on social media, you need to engage more with others. Look for relevant or like-minded brands and businesses in your industry and start interacting with them online. Posting comments on their social media pages will alert them to your online presence and encourage them to check out your page. You will also be tapping into their fan base, which has the potential to help you grow your own.

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