

Human and helpful:

Top Social Media Tips for Small /Medium Businesses



SPEED

Intro

For many of you reading right now, the 'new normal' will look incredibly different across your individual sectors, industries and specialisms. In this guide, we hope to offer some universal social media tips and expertise which can help support you and your business in these uncertain times.



Platform purpose and function

Branded social media pages can have a number of different roles across multiple platforms. From delivering online sales via paid ads to maintaining brand awareness through story posts, there are a multitude of functions available to support your business needs.

Whether you are new to social media or an old timer, our platform breakdown is here to help you navigate the best channels to choose during the current isolation period:

Facebook



- People-first
- Great platform for storytelling
- Clear community and local focus
- Hub for personalised and emotive content

Twitter



- Blends personal and professional audiences
- Built for quick updates and announcements
- Space to inspire topical conversations
- Destination for news-worthy and topical content

LinkedIn



- Business-focused
- Useful space for networking
- Facilitates personal branding and updates
- Prioritises thought leadership content

Instagram



- Visual-first
- Emphasis on lifestyle content
- Provides quick interaction through stories
- Supports quirky and humorous content

Key questions to ask when choosing the most appropriate platform(s):

- What is the most relevant platform for my business?
- How are other businesses in my industry currently using this platform?
- What audiences do I want to communicate with and where are they online?
- How can customers engage with my business through this platform?

Identifying your Core Social Media Offering

During these challenging times, it can be easy to forget about the wealth of skills and expertise you have across your business. A useful method for generating engaging content, when you may not have access to your working site, is to think about your core offering and maximise the experts across your team.

Knowledge is power, so using your industry expertise and specialisms to feed your content stream can be a great way to engage your followers and keep your business front of mind, with posts that are informative and add value.

Content Themes for Testing Times

Sharing content may feel daunting in the current climate but, with some simple guidelines in place, you will be in a position to carry on sharing engaging content across your social platforms.



Key question to ask when developing content themes and angles:

- Could my content be viewed as insensitive?
- Does my content reflect changes in the wider industry?
- Is my content relevant to my follower base in the current climate?
- What key message do I want to communicate through my content?
- Does my content add value for my followers?

Recommended content theme areas:

- Behind-the-scenes style posts, demonstrating how your business has adapted to the isolation period
- Highlighting messages of support for your industry from customers, partners etc.
- Throwback posts using existing visual assets to raise brand awareness
- How-to at home guides, helping you to share your knowledge and keep your customers engaged
- Sharing third-party initiatives and campaigns, particularly on a local level
- Showcasing examples of how you are supporting customers

FAQ: Should I acknowledge the COVID-19 outbreak in my social comms?

We would recommend using your own discretion here, but we know that authenticity and transparency always goes a long way on social media. With this in mind, sharing an update about your current situation which speaks directly to your customers can be a useful exercise in maintaining a personable brand identity.

Crafting the Perfect Post

Once you have some content themes and ideas in place, it's time to start developing your posts. Starting from a place of simplicity is always a plus as some of the best posts on social media often hinge on a clear and concise message which immediately captures the audience.

Here's our formula for a great social media post:

Platform/audience consideration + Engaging post angle/theme + Visually appealing imagery + Clear call-to-action = Great social post!



We'd like to give special mention to integrating a call-to-action within your social media posts as this is one of the primary methods of enhancing engagement with your customers. Calls-to-action can come in all shapes and forms, but here's a few of the key options you can integrate:

- **Link to your website**
- **Ask a question**
- **Encourage a reaction**
- **Encourage direct interaction with your post**

Organising a Post Schedule

While spontaneity is a great way to get creative on social media, establishing a regular post schedule will be helpful in streamlining your posts, covering a balance of themes/topics and providing you with a time efficient solution for managing your social channels. Using a calendar to map out key dates for your posts can be really useful in this context.

Here's our quick guide to the appropriate frequency of posts on a platform-by-platform basis:

 Facebook 3-4 posts per week	 LinkedIn 1-2 posts per week
 Twitter 3-5 tweets per week	 Instagram 3-5 posts per week 1-3 stories daily

As every business is different, with individual needs, please use your own discretion on the above guide but please be aware that some platforms, notably Facebook, will restrict the reach of business pages who share a higher volume of organic posts in a short space of time.

To help you on your scheduling journey, here are a list of useful scheduling tools:

- **Hootsuite**
- **Sprout Social**
- **Buffer**
- **Tweetdeck (Twitter)**
- **Sked Social (Instagram)**

Keeping Up with the Wider Digital Conversation

While delivering engaging content will always be a key aspect of your approach to social media, paying close attention to the wider digital conversations taking place will help you to adapt and inform your social strategy with key insight. To guide you through this process, we have put together some quick suggestions to help you implement effective social listening.



Monitor daily comments and messages on your page to identify any key trends



Set up Google Alerts with focused search terms relevant to your business, so you can keep track of the latest news updates



Use Twitter Lists to group together relevant profiles and review key topics or themes holistically



Research and follow a bank of industry relevant hashtags to monitor key updates and trends



Keep track of key discussions in your industry by joining professional groups via Facebook or LinkedIn

Thinking Long-Term

At a time of uncertainty, it can be easy to lose perspective on the important role social media can play in promoting and supporting your business. This guide is designed to reassure you that tailoring your approach to social media in the short-term can have a number of benefits in the long-term.

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