

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

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As of 2015, the primary social media platforms to consider are Google+, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and Twitter. Here is a synopsis of each:



Facebook

If you want to be a demo god, create a great product to demo. Demos are excellent PR opportunities, but use them when you're ready, not when an opportunity occurs. If your product is mediocre and you don't do a demo, only you will know that it's unremarkable. If you do a demo, the whole world will know it.



Google+

Many "experts" love to hate Google+. They believe it's too small because in raw numbers it's one half the size of Facebook. However because Google+ doesn't have an analogue to Facebook's Edgerank, everyone who "circles" your company can see its posts; this makes up for its smaller size. Also, this is Google after all, and it would be silly to ignore anything Google does.



Instagram

Instagram is for visual storytelling. Companies share pictures of their products or their fans' photos. You can't link to your website in an Instagram post, but many brands excel by connecting with their fans and building solid communities using this service.



LinkedIn

This is the unsung hero of social media. It added social media features late in the game, but the seriousness of its content and comments makes it a useful marketing tool. Stop thinking of LinkedIn as just a place to look for jobs because it's a social-media platform too.



Pinterest

Pinterest is a visual platform where people discover and save the things they love. Brands connect with customers by creating campaigns and Pinterest boards that showcase their products. It is by far the prettiest social-media platform.



Twitter

Think of Twitter as a river: It can get you places fast, but it can also drown you. Twitter is a great platform for promoting and supporting your product in 140-character messages. Twitter is also a potent resource for monitoring your competition and the degree that your company or product is in the social-media conversation.



YouTube

Google's YouTube website is a powerful tool if you can produce interesting and educational videos. This isn't too hard these days because YouTube videos from enthusiastic amateurs are often more effective than ones from slick professionals. You can create your own YouTube channel, and your customers can subscribe to it.

Which of these platforms should your startup support?

All of them. I'd be giving you bad advice if I told you to focus on one or two. But I'd also be giving you bad advice again if I told you that this would take a team of four to six people. One or two people working hard can do it.