

The Newbies Guide to Social Media for Small Business

Which social media platform is best for your business?

If the thought of maintaining several social media accounts makes your head spin, perhaps you should try focusing on one (or a few) that are best suited to your business. Here are four major players, and how to know if they're right for you.

Facebook

An astonishing 50 per cent of people in Australia have Facebook accounts and spend around 25 minutes on the website per visit. From a pure numbers perspective, a Facebook business page is the best social media resource your business can have, and it can help you generate a lot of business. A couple of caveats, though:

- Think about the kind of business you are in. Facebook works better for some businesses than others. Generally, businesses that are consumer facing experience more benefit than B2Bs.
- If you create a page for your business you must be prepared to invest the time in keeping it updated. You need to post regularly and engage your audience by communicating with them (it's not called social media for nothing!). If you aren't able to do this I'd urge you to think twice about setting one up. A Facebook business page with virtual tumbleweed blowing through it will do nothing for your business and is likely to hurt your brand.
- Facebook has the numbers but it is far from a niche site. Think about how people will find your business page in a crowded market. How influential is your network and how do you harness them to help promote your business to *their* network?
- Since Facebook went public, new and "innovative" ways of raising revenue have been coming thick and fast. One of these ways is to charge businesses to promote posts, including to their existing network of fans. In order to effectively use the incredible amount of data that Facebook has, and in order to target both your existing and potential customers, you will need to make a financial investment.

Twitter

Twitter is a great way to get messages out to your followers in 140 characters or less. It also allows you to follow and engage with influencers in your industry. Use hashtags (preface keywords with a # symbol) to comment on hot topics and engage with other participants at industry events.

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Again, it's important to make sure you use your time wisely on Twitter. It may make sense for you to be tweeting about your business during the week but you might be surprised to hear that for some types of brands, engagement with followers is higher at the weekend. Tweets also have higher engagement during "busy" hours of 8am to 7pm, which is, interestingly, the complete *opposite* of when Facebook users engage.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a fantastic resource to build your professional network and is a business-facing as opposed to consumer-facing platform, making it particularly useful if your business is targeting other businesses. It can be used as a marketing tool, and is a great medium to increase your influence and position yourself as an expert in your field. Build your profile by commenting in LinkedIn groups and sharing information or articles to attract potential clients or business partners.

Want more articles like this? Check out the social media section.

Pinterest

Pinterest is great if you sell physical products, as you can use it to drive traffic to the point of purchase. For example, if you sell jewellery online, pin a picture of your product to a board that links through to your website where your customer can purchase. You may find even that Pinterest is already driving traffic to your site (check referral sources with Google Analytics). Pinterest is also useful for promoting the lifestyle of your brand, rather than the brand itself.

With all of the social media options available to you it's important to consider two key questions:

- Where are your customers? Does the market you are trying to target interact on the social media platform you are considering?
- Be realistic about the bandwidth you have to maintain a social media presence.

You may not be able to do everything so it's important you start with the most relevant platform.

Which social media platforms work best for your business?

Course Lessons

Facebook for Business

- Use the computer to set up a Facebook Business Page
- Discover how to use Facebook marketing intelligence to find your customers
- Practice creating Facebook Ads with tips and tricks to engage
- Establish Business vs Personal Facebook settings and manage Admins
- Learn how to automate content and use tools to save time
- Investigate building audiences on Facebook Business Page
- How to Measure success through analytics tools

Lesson 1- How to Open a Facebook Account

This first lesson will introduce you to the Facebook network and the set up procedure.

Lesson 2- Making the Most of your Facebook Account

Now that you have learned how to create Facebook pages and how to invite friends to both, it is time to learn how to make the most of your accounts.

Lesson 3-Taking Facebook Mobile

While you can certainly log into your account from any computer, the majority of Facebook interactions occur via a mobile device. This lesson will demonstrate how to set this up.

Lesson 4- Facebook Security Features

In addition to selecting secure passwords for your account, there are several basic steps you can take to protect your personal information.

Lesson 5- Top Facebook Applications

Facebook applications are virtually limitless, as individual and corporate developers are always looking for new ideas, new tools, new games and new ways

LINKEDIN FOR BUSINESS: INTRODUCTION

Learn how to navigate the world's largest professional networking site, LinkedIn. Learn how to manage your professional identity online by building a credible LinkedIn profile, target relevant industry groups, connect with other professionals, review users looking at your profile and more

Lesson 6- How to Establish a LinkedIn Profile

LinkedIn has established itself in the social media space as the professional networking platform of choice.

Lesson 7- Creating an Effective LinkedIn Profile

The site will guide you through the initial profile building stages, beginning with the import of your current resume.

Lesson 8- Establishing an Effective LinkedIn Network

Now that you have learned not only how to create a LinkedIn account, but how to build an effective profile, it is time to learn how to establish an effective network of contacts.

Lesson 9- Understanding LinkedIn Groups

You can currently become a member of up to 50 LinkedIn Groups, and most networking experts suggest that you take advantage of every opportunity to connect, adding up to the limit.

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Lesson 6- How to Open a Twitter Account

The best thing about Twitter is that you can establish a profile without downloading any special software. To begin, visit www.Twitter.com.

Lesson 7- Following People and Building a Base of Followers

This lesson will demonstrate how to make use of this popular twitter service.

Lesson 8- Adding Twitter Content

You can add content to your Twitter account in a number of ways, and this lesson will demonstrate how to do this effectively.

Lesson 9- Popular Twitter Tools

This lesson will demonstrate how to use popular twitter tools.