

The Definitive Guide to

GROWING YOUR SMALL BUSINESS WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

A comprehensive, step-by-step guide
to creating a social medium strategy
that will drive Growth

Foreword

Dear Readers,

Are you a small business owner, struggling to understand how to utilize social media to grow your business?

Do you know the benefits of social media, but it seems a daunting task to compile a strategy that provides results - especially when you are focused on your core business and lack the time or skill set to concentrate on marketing?

Well, There's Good News:

Creating an effective social media strategy doesn't have to be difficult. With the right tools and templates and a little guidance, you can create a strategy that works, without fancy online tools or a huge marketing budget.

Social media is a marketing powerhouse that shows no sign of slowing down and has become prime real estate for small business owners to showcase their products and services. If you aren't doing the same, you're missing out.

In this free eBook, I'll take you through the steps needed to create an effective social media strategy producing measurable results that will help your business grow

Did You Know?

- The number of worldwide social media users is expected to reach 2.5 billion by 2018.
- 96% of small business owners use social media marketing, and 92% of those agree or strongly agree with the phrase, "Social media marketing is important for my business."
- 93% of all Millennials rely on online consumer reviews from social media when they make purchasing decisions.
- 71% of social media users say that they are more likely to purchase products from the brand they follow on different social media platforms.
- 80% of small businesses use social media websites for monitoring and collecting information about their competitors.

What you're about to discover is an easy step-by-step process that outlines how to create an effective social media strategy that will help grow your business!



An effective social media strategy will help you gain valuable customer insights, increase brand awareness and loyalty, generate higher converting leads, increase website traffic and search rankings, build relationships, and much more.

The next few pages of this eBook will reveal our proven framework to creating a social media strategy that drives real results.

This easy-to-follow guide will walk you through our 7-Step process:

- 1. Define** Marketing Personas
- 2. Set** SMART Goals
- 3. Choose** Impactful Platforms
- 4. Create** a Schedule
- 5. Plan** Your Growth
- 6. Devise** Advertising Campaigns
- 7. Implement** Advanced Tactics

3 Reasons Why You Should Read This eBook:

1. Its principals are easy to implement.
2. It follows a proven system that works.
3. It will drive measurable results for your small business.

Follow Sam's Journey

To provide more context to the guide, we will be applying our techniques to a fictitious small business owner named Sam, a personal trainer located in Sydney.

Sam has a small base of loyal clients, but he is exploring cost-effective options to attract new clients and he has decided that social media would provide the best results.

Excited?

You should be! These tried and tested principles are about to save and make you some serious money for your business.

Ready? Let's Dive In!

1 Define Marketing Personas

Marketing personas are generalized representations of your customers.

They are used to deliver relevant content to your target market.

It takes time to research and define your marketing personas, but they are helpful in providing structure and insight into not only your social media strategy, but your marketing strategy as a whole.

They will help you determine where you should be focusing your resources, which will result in attracting more leads and customers to your business.

Marketing Persona Questions



1. Who are they?

Demographics such as gender, age, and education.

2. What is their job?

Data such as title, company size, industry, and general job responsibilities.

3. What are their identifiers?

Information such as personality, communication preferences, and availability.

4. What are their goals?

Explain what they find valuable in a product and what they are trying to accomplish.

5. What are their challenges?

Explain what is preventing them from reaching their goals.


6. How can you help them overcome their challenges?

List ways you can solve their problems and provide value.

Sam's Marketing Personas

Sam has already created several marketing personas based upon his existing client base and found some common trends among them.

Sam's ideal customer:



STEVE

DEMOGRAPHICS

- 47 years old
- Male
- 100k + yearly income
- Master's degree
- Lives in Houston, TX
- Married, two children

GOALS

- Build stamina
- Lose bodyfat
- Improve overall health

HOW WE CAN HELP

- Create a structured workout routine that will give maximum results in minimum time
- Supply motivational support to keep Steve healthy and happy
- Share nutrition tips

BACKGROUND

Owner of a small commercial printer company

He founded the company 10 years ago, after leaving IBM

IDENTIFIERS

- Calm demeanor
- Very busy
- Prefers structured schedules
- Has secretary

CHALLENGES

- Very little time
- Hesitant to hire personal trainer
- Not motivated to work out often
- Unhealthy diet

Sam's customers are professionals that visit the gym occasionally, but lack the motivation to achieve their fitness goals. He can design a structured workout regime that will provide maximum benefits within a limited timeframe.

Once you understand your customer's pain points and the solutions that your company can offer them, you can create social media content based on the information your marketing personas are searching for, and how they search for it.

2 Setting Goals

Goal setting is vital for any marketing campaign as it provides a result to aim for and the strategic steps needed to achieve it.

We will be setting SMART goals which is an acronym for specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely.

Specific: be clear and defined.

Measurable: include metrics that will track the progress of the goal.

Attainable: set achievable goals.

Realistic: ensure you have the resources needed to achieve this goal.

Timely: best practices show that goals should be set between 3 and 6 month intervals for social media.

Setting SMART goals is going to help you clearly define your social media strategy.



How to Set S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Many small business owners set vague goals like “getting more followers” or “expanding my reach”; however, a SMART goal would clearly define “Increase our total Instagram followers by 20% over the next 3 months by adding popular hashtags to our posts”.

See the difference? You are defining exactly what you want to do, how you are going to do it, and how long it will take. This also gives your team a clear direction to reach the goal.

Sam's Goals

Let's revisit Sam and talk about the SMART goals he can set for his social media marketing campaign.

Sam has two main objectives for social media:

1. Increase local awareness about his services.
2. Generate more leads for his business.

Increase local awareness about his services

Sam has a company Facebook page but he only has around 100 followers and his content isn't seen outside them. Increasing his organic reach (the number of people who view his posts) is a great way to spread the word about his services.

Since he wants more people to know about his services, increasing his organic reach (the number of people who viewed his post) would be a great way to spread the word about his services. Every new person that is exposed to his content is a new potential client for Sam.

Sam's SMART Goal

Increase organic reach on Facebook by 25% over the next three months by posting personal weight loss tips three times a week.

This goal clearly defines that he wants to reach a new audience by leveraging his personal experience in the health industry and creating unique content that his audience will want to share with their friends.

Generate more leads for his business

Sam gets an occasional lead from Facebook however it's not consistent and he's having trouble filling his schedule. He's considering offering a free training session to generate leads.

Sam's SMART Goal:

Generate five new leads a week on Facebook over the next six months by promoting a free training session every Friday.

The goal is clearly defined and the session is used as a lead magnet - an irresistible value offer in exchange for a prospect's contact information.



3 Choosing Impactful Platforms

There are hundreds of major social media sites on the web, but only a small handful of them are suitable for your business.

Each social platform has unique attributes that can help you reach your specific goals. Some platforms require multiple posts per day in order to fully engage in the community, while others may allow for less activity.

Choosing social media platforms is about understanding what goals you want to achieve, and what resources you have.

When it comes to choosing which social media platforms you should use, select the best potential for reaching your audience and broadcast the type of media you've decided is best suited for your organization.

Let's examine which platforms are best suited for your small business.



1. Facebook

If you could only choose one social media platform for your business, Facebook should be it. As of March 2016, Facebook had amassed over 1.65 billion active users. Over 1 billion users log in daily on Facebook and they generate almost 5 billion likes.

Marketers consider Facebook the most powerful social media platform in the world. It has just become the 4th most valuable company worldwide, nipping at the heels of Google, Apple, and Microsoft.

If you are not currently using Facebook to promote your business, get on it now.

2. Twitter

Considered to be another powerhouse platform, Twitter has become wildly popular as a venue in which businesses can communicate directly with their followers, being more "in the moment" than Facebook. It has become an ideal platform to share real-time updates, breaking news, or answer customer's questions.

As of April 2016, there were over 320 million active users on Twitter, pumping out over 500 million tweets daily.

If your market requires you to communicate quickly with your customers, or if you often need to share breaking news and updates, then Twitter is a perfect fit for your business.

3. Instagram

Instagram allows anyone to take ordinary photos and make them look extraordinary. It also allows instantaneous sharing of your photos with just a few taps. It utilizes the power of hashtags, perhaps better than any other platform, to assist its users in discovering multimedia and other Instagram users.

It has one of the youngest audiences on the planet. Over 90 percent of the total 400 million active monthly users are under the age of 35. It is one of the most actively used social media platforms on our list with over 80 million photos being uploaded every day. When Instagram introduced the ability to upload videos, more than 5 million were shared within 24 hours.

If you are in a visually-based market like photography, travel, luxury brands, or even food, Instagram is the platform for you.



4. YouTube

Widely recognized as the second most popular search engine after Google, YouTube is on par with Facebook, having over 1 billion active users around the world. Over 300 hours of video are being uploaded every minute to the site, and a total of 3.25 billion hours of video are being watched every month.

Video content is more enjoyable to most users which means that your target audience stays on page much longer than those reading text. Not only do YouTube videos drive traffic and produce excellent search results, they also provide a medium in which you can establish your expertise and showcase your business' unique personality.

Anyone looking to market their business with video advertising should use YouTube as their primary platform.

5. LinkedIn

There are over 400 million users on LinkedIn, and over 100 million of them login every month. Over 3 million companies have a LinkedIn page, and the platform has a reputation for being the go-to place for recruiters and business professionals.

Social media platforms aren't ideal for generating Business to Business (B2B), leads but LinkedIn is the most effective. In fact, LinkedIn is responsible for more than 80 percent of a business's social media leads.

Anyone wanting to make connections with business professionals or generate more B2B leads should be using LinkedIn.

6. Google +

Not as popular as Facebook or Twitter, Google+ is still a platform that deserves attention. Over 300 million users are active on Google+, 10 million of which signed up within two weeks of its initial release.

Due to its integration with Google Maps, Google+ is a highly-recommended platform for local businesses since its local listings features allows increased visibility on local search results. Also, unlike other social media platforms, your status updates have a chance to be shown in Google search results, giving an additional opportunity to drive traffic.

Any local businesses wanting to share info on Google maps such as contact details, photos and business hours should create a Google+ business page and get their business verified.

Sam's Choice:

After carefully reviewing his marketing personas, Sam decided that in addition to his Facebook business page, he also wanted to incorporate Twitter into his strategy since he has a lot of expert advice about health and nutrition that he could tweet throughout the day.



4 When to Publish Content

You probably think that you are in a position to start pumping out awesome content targeted to your marketing personas.

I love your enthusiasm, but let's first talk about timing.

Creating value-driven, unique content on a regular basis is simply not enough. Just because you are posting great content on your page doesn't necessarily mean that your audience is seeing it.

Posting content on certain days of the week, and specific times of the day, can have a huge impact on your social media efforts.

Let's cover the basics.

1. Facebook

Who is on Facebook?

Facebook users are 53% female and 47% male, the average user has 130 “friends”, and 87% of all online users between the ages of age 18-29 use Facebook.

How do they use it?

Over 1.3 billion users log in to Facebook through their mobile device every month and the average person spends about 20 minutes on a Facebook page. Also, 48% of 18-34-year-old users check their Facebook as soon as they wake up.

Best times to post:

Saturdays and Sundays from 12:00 - 1:00pm.
Wednesday, Thursdays, and Fridays from 1:00 - 4:00 pm.

Generally, people are more active in the evening around 8pm, but the optimal time of the day to post is in the early afternoon. Posts receive the most shares at 1pm, and get the most amount of likes at 3pm. Furthermore, Thursdays and Fridays are the best days to post on Facebook.

2. Twitter

Who is on Twitter?

Twitter has never asked the users of their platform to specify their gender, but it is estimated that over 60% of Twitter users are male. Also, 35% of users are between the ages of 18-29 and 20% are between the ages of 30-49.

How do they use it?

83% of users have accessed Twitter via mobile, and 90% of videos watched also came from mobile users. The average time a Twitter user spends on the site per month is about 170 minutes..

Best times to post:

Mondays through Fridays from 12:00 -3:00pm. Wednesdays from 5:00 - 6:00 pm.

Tweeting at 5pm results in the highest number of retweets while tweeting at 12 pm and 6 pm results in the highest click through rates. Also, B2B businesses get the most amount of engagement on Mondays through Fridays, but B2C businesses get the most amount of engagement on Wednesdays through Sundays.



3. Instagram

Who is on Instagram?

51% of Instagram users are male while 49% are female. This social media platform has one of the youngest user demographics as 90% of Instagram users are under 35 years old.

How do they use it?

Instagram is a phone-based platform, and the app's users are neatly divided 50/50 between owners of Android and Apple devices.

Best times to post:

Anytime Monday through Thursday, except between 3:00 - 4:00 pm

Photos with faces receive 39% more likes, and to increase your post's engagement by up to 56%, include user handle captions, posts with locations, and posts that contain at least one hashtag.



4. LinkedIn

Who is on LinkedIn?

56% of LinkedIn users are male, while 44% are female. Also, 27% of users are between the ages of 30-49, and 24% of users are between the ages of 50-64.

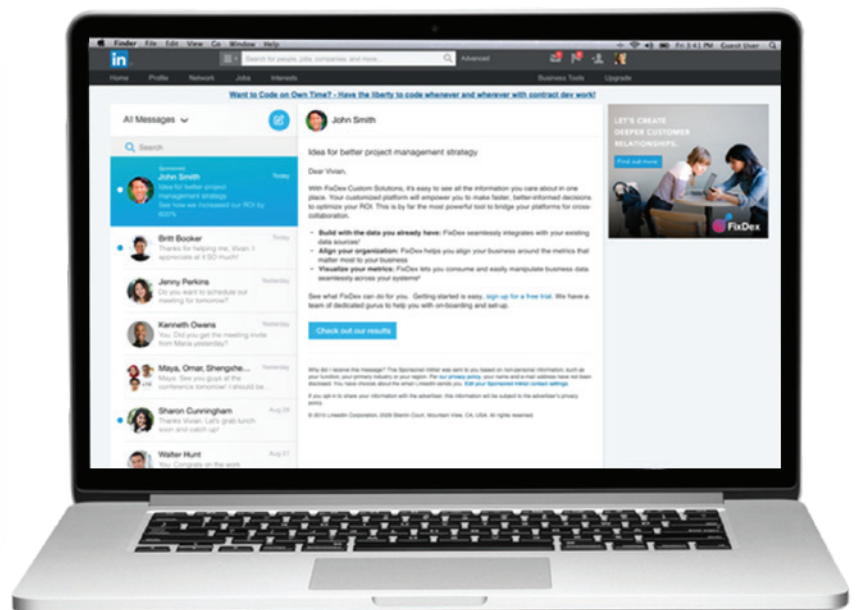
How do they use it?

There are over 42 million unique monthly mobile visitors on LinkedIn and these users are spending an average of 17 minutes on their account every month.

Best times to post:

Wednesdays and Thursdays from 7:30 - 8:30 am & 5:00 - 6:00 pm. Tuesdays from 10:00 - 11:00 am

LinkedIn is used by professional so it is best to post during working hours. Adding an image to a LinkedIn post can increase engagement by up to 98% while adding links to your posts can increase engagement by 200%!



5. Google +

Who is on Google+?

74% of Google+ users are male while 26% are female. Also, 22% of users age 25-35 login to Google+ at least once a month.

How do they use it?

About 20 million Google+ users visit the site on mobile, and they are spending about 7 minutes a month on the site. Also, 25% of high school students use Google+ daily.

Best times to post:

Mondays through Fridays from 9:00 to 11:00am.

Google Plus users are generally active during weekday mornings, and Wednesday has shown to be the best day to post on Google+. Also, the best ways to increase engagement on your posts is by using photos, hashtags, and mentioning influencers and followers.



Sam's Choice:

Since Sam has chosen Facebook and Twitter as his social media channels, he has decided that he will post content Wednesday through Sunday in the early afternoon on Facebook, and he will Tweet Mondays through Fridays during his lunch break.

5 Increasing Your Audience

We have discussed where to post content and at what time, but without an audience, this is all in vain. The more followers you have on social media, the wider your brand's reach.

There are two ways to build your audience and increase likes - organically and through paid campaigns. In this section, we will cover the organic process.

Generating organic traffic is a great way to provide a steady flow of visitors to your website. It increases your rankings on search engines and is one of the most cost-effective ways to generate leads. Let's cover the top ways to build your audience organically and to increase likes.

There are two ways to build your audience and increase likes - organically and through paid campaigns. In this section, we will cover the organic process.



Post Highly-Engaging Content

When it comes to generating organic traffic, content is king. Once you have picked the right platform, it's time to start providing valuable content to your audience.

To drive past your competitor's efforts, you need to provide real value by sharing expert advice that will help them solve their problems. Also, sharing trending or viral content that is related to your market is a great way to encourage engagement.

It is best to set a schedule in which you decide how often to share advice, trending topics, updates about your business, and promoting your brand. But never forget, you should only be promoting your products and services once for every five posts so that you aren't over-promoting your brand.

Keep Your Channels Updated

A common misconception about social media is that all you need to do is set up your channels, put some content on them, and you will be on your way to increasing sales. This is not true as social media is not a "set it and forget it" tool.

Social media accounts don't grow by themselves. They need to be maintained by creating posts and interacting with your audience on a regular basis. The key to building an audience is consistency. If you can only post twice a week on your channels, then consistently post twice a week. Do not post a bunch of content in a week, and think that it will hold you over for the month.

Build Relationships with Your Audience

Social media is not a place to only promote your products and services. It is the prime location for you to reach out to your audience and build a real connection with them. I'm not saying that you must connect directly with every single one of your followers, but use it to respond to inquiries in real time. Interacting with them builds a sense of belonging to your brand, and it in turn develops into trust and credibility. Your followers are much more likely to convert into sales if they have been engaged with directly through social media.

Promos and Giveaways

A great way to increase your sales is by providing both your current and potential customers with value in the form of free giveaways, hosting a live event, or even with a free downloadable eBook!

Giving your audience something valuable for free greatly increases the chances of them not only remembering your brand, but also engaging with it on a regular basis. Making this connection is the first step to creating loyal customers for your brand.

Sam's Choice:

After considering how he could help solve the problems of his buyer personas, Sam has decided that he will use Twitter as a platform to post unique tips and tricks about getting in shape, dieting, and motivation. For Facebook, he will include the same type of content, but also share articles written by industry professionals. On Fridays for both platforms, he will promote his free consultation.

Bonus Tips 7

Advanced Technique



Going beyond these steps, there are several advanced techniques that will help your brand perform even better on social media. Here are our favorites:

Utilize Multimedia

As we mentioned before, content is king. There was a time when snapping a nice photo or publishing a funny post was more than enough to create a buzz online, but the average internet user gets bombarded daily with ads, calls to action, funny cat videos, and more. This has also made the average consumer much pickier as anything they want to view is accessible with a few clicks of the mouse.

To make an impression on your social media channels, you need to go beyond simple text. It's important that you create a strategy that combines a mixture of video, infographics, text, and maybe even some podcasts or PowerPoint Presentations. The key is to keep your audience entertained and engaged

Prioritize Mobile Devices

As mentioned previously, 1.25 billion Facebook users are accessing the site from a mobile device.

Your audience is much more likely to see your posts from a phone or tablet than they are a desktop so your campaigns should prioritize these types of devices.

Not only should your social media content look good on mobile, but the landing pages that you are driving them to also need to be responsive and optimized for any screen size or resolution. Make sure to thoroughly test any landing page that you might drive traffic to before sharing links on social media.

Provide a Seamless Connection

Not only should your landing pages be optimized for mobiles, they should also seamlessly connect from your social media posts and ads. Key aspects to keep consistent are tone of voice, color schemes, visuals, and fonts. Nothing kills a conversion rate faster than having someone click on your beautiful Facebook ad, then be directed to a sloppy landing page.

The best approach is to create your landing pages first, test them on numerous platforms and browsers, make sure they are responsive and user friendly, and then create ads and social media posts that incorporate the same consistency.

Cross Promote Your Social Media Channels

You should always look for opportunities to link your social media channels to each other. For example, your YouTube channel offers spots for linking to your Google+, Facebook, and Twitter while Google+ allows you to link to any social media channel that you choose. Don't forget to link your channels to your website so that you can drive traffic accordingly.

Also, don't be afraid to promote your social media channels in your posts. Send out a tweet with your Facebook URL or add a call to action on your YouTube videos to follow you on Facebook. Just make sure that you provide additional value by joining the new channel.

Experiment

Using social media properly can be complex. There are many factors that go into running a campaign, and what might work well for someone else in your industry, might fall flat on your page. All social media platforms take time to grow and to mature, and you shouldn't worry about having everything perfect at once.

Sometimes the best strategy to follow is trial and error. See what kind of content works, and see what doesn't. Sometimes your content is great, but you don't share it across the proper channel. Also, make sure that you constantly measure your results so that you can understand trends in the market, and modify if necessary.

Congratulations!

You have made it!

You now possess the knowledge to start growing your small business through social media.

As a quick recap:

1. **Establish** your marketing personas.
2. **Set** SMART goals for your campaign.
3. **Choose** the right platforms.
4. **Decide** the best time to post.
5. **Regularly** develop unique and engaging content.

By following these techniques, you will be on your way to increasing your brand's reach, generating more interest and leads, having a medium in which to encourage your audience into becoming customers, and ultimately, driving more sales and revenue into your small business.

Learn How We Can Help Grow Your Business!

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