



Developing a social media strategy for your small business

Creating a comprehensive social media strategy that leverages TikTok, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Facebook involves understanding the unique advantages and audiences of each platform. Below is a tailored strategy for a small business aiming to maximize its online presence and engagement across these platforms.

1. Objective Setting

Before diving into platform-specific strategies, define clear objectives. These could include increasing brand awareness, generating leads, driving website traffic, or boosting sales. Objectives should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

- You will have a limited amount of bandwidth and budget to spend on marketing. Therefore, first, you will need to prioritize which platforms you want to focus time (and potentially money) on.
- Also, you will need to be continuously assessing your results on social media, building on what is working and abandoning (or revising) posts / campaigns that are not adequately delivering on your marketing objectives.

2. Understanding the Audience

- **TikTok & Instagram:** Generally younger audiences, perfect for building brand awareness and engagement through creative and visually appealing content.
- **LinkedIn:** A professional audience, ideal for B2B marketing, networking, and establishing industry authority.
- **Facebook:** Primarily a consumer audience. Companies can make free posts which are visible to their followers. Facebook also offers highly targeted advertising options based on users' demographics, interests and behaviors.

3. Platform-Specific Strategies

TikTok

- **Content Creation:** Focus on trending topics, challenges, and hashtags relevant to your niche. Utilize TikTok's unique features like duets, stitches, and music to make engaging content.
- **Engagement:** Readily interact with followers through comments, participate in trends, and collaborate with influencers to extend reach.

Instagram

- **Diverse Content Formats:** Utilize posts, Stories, Reels (Instagram's knock-off of TikTok), and IGTV for varied content that caters to different audience preferences.
- **Hashtag Strategy:** Research and use niche-specific hashtags to improve discoverability. Use Instagram Insights to refine strategy.
- **Engagement:** Regularly engage with followers through comments, polls, and Q&A sessions in Stories to build a community.

LinkedIn

- **Professional Content:** Regularly share industry insights, company news, and professional achievements. Content should be more formal and informative. It is OK to promote / share your business's accomplishments! But it should be in a way that is oriented to be useful to your audience.
- **Networking:** Connect with industry professionals and participate in groups to increase visibility.
- **LinkedIn Ads:** Consider using LinkedIn Ads for targeted B2B campaigns, focusing on decision-makers in relevant industries.

Facebook

- **Facebook Posts:** Ideally post several times per week. Use compelling images with concise content that is relevant to your audience. Strategic use of hashtags can increase the discoverability of your posts and help you reach a wider audience beyond your followers.
- **Facebook Ads:** Advertisers can create various ad formats, including image ads, video ads, carousel ads, and more, to reach their target audience effectively. Facebook's ad manager provides tools for creating, managing, and analyzing ad campaigns, allowing advertisers to track performance metrics such as reach, engagement, clicks, and conversions.

Additionally, Facebook offers advanced features like:

- **Retargeting:** Showing your ads to people who have already visited your website or Facebook page.
- **Lookalike audience:** Facebook can expand your reach by showing your ads to people who are similar to your website visitors, Facebook page visitors, or even your current list of ideal customers.
- **Custom audience:** You can define your own custom audience based on Facebook users' gender, age, income, level of education, and interests.

Note that, if you set your Facebook advertising budget at about \$25 per day, Facebook reps will help you design your campaigns, and take advantage of these advanced features.

4. Cross-Promotion and Integration

Ensure that your marketing efforts across these platforms are integrated. Cross-promote content where appropriate, such as sharing TikTok videos on Instagram Stories or highlighting Instagram posts on LinkedIn. Use Facebook Posts and Ads to drive traffic to your best-performing social media content or your website.

5. Analytics and Adjustments

Regularly review analytics on each platform to understand what works and what doesn't. Adjust your strategy based on performance metrics, audience engagement, and conversion rates. Be prepared to pivot your approach based on trends, platform updates, and changes in your business objectives.

6. Budget Allocation

Allocate your budget based on the platforms that offer the best ROI for your objectives. Consider both organic and paid strategies, adjusting spending based on performance and seasonal trends.

Conclusion

A successful social media strategy for a small business requires a nuanced understanding of each platform's strengths and audience. By tailoring content and engagement strategies to TikTok, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Facebook, you can build a cohesive and effective online presence that drives business goals. Remember, flexibility and responsiveness to analytics will be key to optimizing your strategy, and the “return on investment” of your effort and marketing spend, over time.

Note – this document is meant to be accompanied by oral commentary from a Harvard Business School alumni coach.