

2017 Small Business Social Media Handbook

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The Beginning Of Social

Social media gives both an ear and a voice to those who seek it. The majority of social media users are consumers and listeners. This works in your favor as an organization with a voice, you theoretically have the entire world at your feet. If you can get them to listen. However, there is still a lot of noise to cut through in order to get noticed. That is what making it on social media is all about. You have to offer something that people want. We already know that your business fills a need in the real world, so this handbook will help you begin to fulfil customers' needs online via social media.

Social media began with websites like LiveJournal, MySpace, and Xanga. They were the first platforms that allowed anyone to create an account and share media with anyone else, for free. This flexibility used to only be available to big businesses that created intranets - their own internal social network/communication platform. And The only things that were free and came close were email and forums. E-mail was restricted to people you knew already and forums weren't very flexible with personalization, rich media or sharing.

Then comes Facebook in the early 2000s. It started as a way for college students to communicate with each other in a more open, personal setting. Shortly after Facebook's launch, Twitter was launched. It was built as a SMS-based platform for individuals to share their thoughts for anyone to see. These two platforms paved the way for most social networks that have come into existence since.

Popular platforms

- Facebook - The behemoth of social. Their slogan is *Connect with friends and the world around you on Facebook*. Facebook started in the early 2000s. After the initial user growth of early adopters (2003 - 2011), it only took about 5 years (2011 - present) for most of the developed world to get on Facebook All businesses that want to keep up with their customers are now on this platform. Most parents are also on this platform.
- Twitter - You can say a lot in 140 characters. Most businesses keep a steady presence on Twitter. Though most companies are on Twitter, not all individuals are on Twitter. The active user base is not as large as Facebook, but the users that *are* engaged are valuable. Twitter is a great way to gain exposure to new individuals - something not as easily achieved for free on Facebook.
- Instagram - It's all about visuals. It is all about capturing a beautiful moment and sharing it for others to take part in. With the recent addition of Instagram Stories and the steady influx of users, Instagram could be the most cost-effective social network for businesses at this time. It's the best way to keep your current fan and customers updated.

- Pinterest - Slowly this network has become the go-to platform to reach moms and (mostly) women with disposable income. Pinterest allows users to create pin boards of things or experiences they want - kind of like a wish list. If your content is a right fit or framed in the right way, Pinterest can be a place to gain exposure to potential customers.
- Snapchat - THIS is where the tweens are. SnapChat is the fastest growing social network and for good reason. It allows users to communicate in ephemeral messages like photos and video clips. Send messages directly to friends or share your messages on a Story for all to see. Since parents aren't really on this, it's not necessary to get on at this moment, but I would recommend getting acquainted with the platform.
- LinkedIn - It's all about business. LinkedIn is a great place to find business partners, local organizations and vendors, and also find potential employees. If you have not already added your business or employer to your profile, do this ASAP!
- Vine - Vine is all about comical, creative, awe-inspiring micro content. Videos are limited to 6 seconds, giving a unique platform to content creators. While it's not essential to have your organization on Vine, I would get to know this platform as well.
- Google+ - Last but not least, Google+ is a quiet yet powerful social network. Google+ might not have a ton of active users, but maintaining a presence here will help bolster your web page search rankings. Post to Google+ anything you would post to any other social network. Keep it short and to the point.

Niche platforms

These are industry or service specific platforms. There are social media networks for everything from cat lovers to oil industry companies. It's usually worth doing some research to discover potential niche social media platforms.

Hashtags

Hashtags are the community cork boards of the internet. The TV channels of the world wide web. Hashtags categorize your content so that others looking for related media or content can find it. Most social networks allow you to click on hashtags to see other posts with the same hashtag. This is how you can find exposure on Instagram and Twitter. Hashtags on Facebook are still a new idea. Adding a hashtag here and there won't hurt, but FB's hashtag discovery platform doesn't yet match the power of Twitter and Instagram's.

Consider which hashtags are most effective for your business. Some hashtags might be way more active than others. Some super-niche hashtags might be less active but the small amount of users looking at that hashtag might be way more interested than the large amount of users looking at a broad hashtag.

Why Social Is Important

1. **This is where your customers are** and where they're talking about you. At any moment someone might be talking about your business on a social network. If you are not there to either thank them or address an issue, you've left the customer to their own interpretation of your business. Instead of allowing them to wonder if you care about them, you must be on the lookout for any and all things being said about your business.

It is important to be on social networks because that's where your customers are. They might be giving you hints on their needs without even knowing it. Customers might be ranting about one of your staff. Whether the rant is based on truth or not, if you are not around to see it and address it, your reputation may be affected.

2. **Your competitors are there.** This is a big one. You can keep an eye on what your competitors are doing with their marketing and advertising and also their interaction with their own community. You might pick up tips and strategies that work for them and apply them to your own social media strategy.

You should use social media as a way to keep track of competitors and especially competitors' customers. Maybe a competitor's customer has made a complaint about them. You then have some insider knowledge AND an opportunity to address that need with your own customers, should the issue arise. If you decide it is appropriate to get in on the conversation, BE TACTFUL! This is an opportunity to not only help someone but gain a lead.

3. **Brand Authority.** Social networks give you a chance to portray your brand consistently across the internet. The Nike swoosh is powerful because of what you feel and think of when you see that symbol. It is important that customers feel at home across all of your social media channels.

Benefits of Social for Business

1. **Potential for worldwide exposure.** You can get a great deal of local hype from global exposure.
2. **Potential go “go viral”** if you create, capture or share some astounding content.
3. **Lead generation** - Your followers and fans are all potential customers. The content you publish on your social media platforms can attract leads!
4. **Customer retention** - Communicate with current and past customers. You can keep lists of customers to engage with. If you initiate a tweet or a comment on Instagram, you make the customer feel special and show that your business cares for them.
5. **24/7 newswire** - Communicate news and announcements instantly to both the world and your current followers. You can also keep tabs on your industry and competitors' news and announcements. This keeps you ahead of the game.
6. **Instant communication.** There used to be a massive communication hurdles between businesses and their customers before and after the point of sale. With social media, you can communicate with your customers instantly. This can be beneficial in emergency situations. It can also help reach customers that may not have access to phone or email at the moment.
7. **Customer service.** Facilitating customer service issues on social media is another huge benefit. You can keep track of customers via their usernames or real names (on Facebook) and help them solve any problem they may be having. Whether you take care of it all on social or use social to connect and diagnose the problem, then finish on the phone or in person - social media is playing a huge role in customer service.
8. **Customer feedback aka LISTENING.** Social media is one of the easiest ways to receive custom feedback. A simple tweet can go a long way. You can use social media to monitor chatter about your company. LISTENING to what the market and your customers are saying can give you valuable insight. Listening can help head off potentially unhappy customers or encourage happy customers. Social media gives your customers a chance to be heard. Treat them and their opinions with respect.

Creating Content

Turn your everyday business operations into content. Think about your day in sections. Which sections would be appealing to your community? Almost every aspect of your business has potential to be captured and turned into original content.

1. **Paid content** - It is highly suggested to pay for original content development, if you can afford it. There's something you can do with any budget. Start small. With \$50 you could ask a local artist or student to create a short film to run on your Facebook page. With \$50 you could get a professional content writer to write an op-ed or thought-leadership article. Publish it on your website to generate traffic from SEO or find a publication that might be interested in publishing your article. Usually users are savvy enough to tell if content is homemade or professionally produced. Try and find the balance between DIY and paid content. An appropriate mix can give your social media presence a leading edge.

2. **DIY Content** - This is content you create on your own. This can include photos and videos shot on a mobile device, a point-and-shoot digital camera or a real, professional camera. There are ways to improve your mobile photography skills that can greatly benefit your business. Taking a good photo or video is key to creating content for social media. It comes in handy on-the-go and when capturing a fleeting moment. DIY content can be designed in Photoshop or other image editing tools. Some basic free tools can be found online by searching around for "online image editor" or similar keywords.

3. **Recycled content**
 - a. **Memes** - Memes are a great way to communicate on the internet. Memes are: "an element of a culture or system of behavior that may be considered to be passed from one individual to another by nongenetic means, especially imitation." An updated definition is: "a humorous image, video, piece of text, etc. that is copied (often with slight variations) and spread rapidly by Internet users." If you see a meme that's related to your business or something that your customers might engage with, retweet it or share it!

 - b. **Republishing** - Distributing content that someone else has already published. Presenting third party content to your followers from your account. This is curation. Republishing attaches your brand with high quality content while not infringing upon any media or copyright laws.

Specifics

Facebook

The largest social media network. Teens and tweens no longer represent the bulk of Facebook users. Parents and grandparents are joining fast. This is important to know when you are using Facebook as a business. It's not necessarily a cool, hip thing anymore. It's a utility. It's for people with real relationships to communicate with each other AND organizations (groups of people) that they like. Seeing that your customers are usually adults, you definitely want to maintain a steady presence on Facebook.

Facebook started as a place we go to see what our friends and family are up to. Now, we get so much more information all in one place. We get updates about our friends, local, national and international news, updates from our favorite brands and businesses, information shared in groups, information shared person to person, and the list continues to grow.

Pages and Profiles - what's the difference? One of the most important distinctions to make is the difference between PAGES and PROFILES. Pages are for business and organizations. Profiles are for individual persons. We have moved past the old days of businesses using profiles. It is actually against Facebook's Terms of Service for an organization to present their brand using a person profile.

The important fact to know is that Facebook still treats PEOPLE as the main user. Facebook pages require a PROFILE to manage the page. This is how we can allow multiple users to manage the same PAGE without sharing passwords. Each person has their own PROFILE. That PROFILE can be added as an admin to any number of different Facebook PAGES.

This is also true for Facebook Ads. Facebook Ad accounts are tied to a person's PROFILE - not a page. Ad accounts can be managed by multiple users, but the page has nothing to do with the actual admin of the ads. The page is simply the vessel for the ad's message. Keep this in mind when you decide to run some ads.

Status updates

These are the different types of individual posts that appear on your timeline and in your fans' newsfeeds.

- **Text** - The original Facebook status update. This type of update offers an unlimited amount of words that is shared as one post to your fans.
- **Image** - The most engaging type of status update. You can upload an image and share it with your fans. Share images that your fans will relate to or appreciate. Images can be photos, memes, art - anything really! Keep it high-def and high quality. Think to yourself: "Would my fans like this? Would they laugh? Would they even care?" An image only qualifies for posting if you can answer yes to all of those questions.
- **Image album** - Use an image album to upload a collection of related images, e.g. graduation day, a specific classroom, a field trip, a specific subject. Albums are visually pleasing on Facebook, so try to share them when you can!
- **Video** - Video is quickly becoming the most engaging media on Facebook. Sharing videos is like gold on Facebook. You'll get lots of free exposure simply by re-sharing a video that's going around. You'll get more specific exposure if you upload your own original videos to your Facebook page. (Refer to the "Creating Content" section of the handbook for ideas on creating your own videos)
- **Event** - Creating an event can be powerful for a tight knit community. Events are a great way to remind fans and friends about an event, but don't rely solely on the Facebook EVENT to promote the actual event. Use it in tandem with ongoing social media and real-world promotion. Use the Facebook event to make fun posts leading up to the event, share updates on the day of event, and communicate with attendees after the event for issues like lost and found or planning another one!

Profiles

Profiles share a two-way mutually visible relationship with other profiles and a one-way relationship with pages. Profiles that are connected as friends can see whatever the other person has posted on their page. This is NOT TRUE of profiles that like Pages. Pages cannot see any posts from a profile unless that profile has tagged the page in a specific post or a comment. Visibility of posts and profiles varies between profiles, based on the user's privacy settings.

Pages

Pages were developed to give businesses a presence on Facebook. In the early days, businesses and organizations would set up new PROFILES so they could add friends and promote to their customers. This was always a little shady, kind of gaming the system. Since PROFILES are designed for people to communicate with other individual people, there was a lot of confusion and noise created when businesses used profiles to conduct business activity on Facebook. Hence, the need for a different kind of account. Enter: Facebook Pages for Business.

- **Publishing** - Use your Facebook page as your own personal news distribution platform. Use it as a way to keep your current customers updated. Use it to inform and entertain your local and online community. Use your page to acknowledge special events or announcements that your customers might find interesting. Refer to the status updates section above for ideas on what to publish to your page.
- **Connections are called FANS (likes)** - This is generally a one-way relationship. The fan can see the updates posted by the page, but the page cannot see anything from the fan's profile unless the fan specifically shares it with the page.
- **Interacting/Engaging**
 - **Comments** - Always reply to productive, inquisitive or complimentary comments on your page! If a comment is not appropriate, you should take action by removing the comment, or if completely necessary - banning the user. Do not tolerate any kind of bullying or trolling on your page. You have the right to maintain peaceful order in your community.
 - **Likes** - Always like comments posted on your page. Sometimes there's no need to reply with a comment of your own, but liking the comment shows the users that you saw their post.
 - **Messaging**
 - Fans can message pages and pages can message back
 - You can assign multiple roles to managing Facebook Page messages
 - You can notate conversation with fans to keep track of leads and customer service issues
 - You may also choose to remove the ability to fans to message your page, but this is not recommended. You WANT people to be able to contact you in as many ways as possible.

- **CTA (Call To Action button)** - This is one of Facebook's biggest steps in helping businesses generate leads from their Facebook Pages. It is located on the right side, under the cover photo. The button can be set to say many things like "Download" "learn More" or "Call Us." The button can activate a number of actions, it can:
 - link to a web page
 - call a phone number
 - watch a video
 - Send a Facebook message
 - Many more! Check out the options on your Facebook page by hovering over the button and selecting "Edit Button".

- **Groups** - Groups are powerful, close knit communities that share content based on one common theme. I suggest you research and join some local groups related to your organization's industry. You join groups with your profile, not the page. Only join to do market research. Only contribute to the discussion if it directly benefits the members. Try not to mention your business until you build some trust in the group first. If you list your business on your personal profile, those that are interested enough will find it. If somebody specifically asks for learning centers or programs that you offer, then you may freely reply with some information on your business.

- **Facebook Ads** - Facebook's highly specific audience targeting makes it one of the most effective advertising platforms currently available. The two main columns of advertising on Facebook are advertising to users not currently fans of your page and paying to show content to your existing fans.

- **Trending Topics** - Keep an eye on trending topics. These are similar to trending topics on Twitter. You have the chance to jump in on a conversation and offer your expertise. You may engage as either your personal profile or your business page.

- **Page Apps (Tabs)**
 - **About** - This tab is where you can display all the critical information about your company. Fields include a general About section, phone number, address, website, category, operating hours and more. Fill out as many of these fields as you can so potential customers are fully informed.

- **Photos** - Here you will find all of the photos ever published by the page. You will also see the first four photo albums. Click “See All” to see all of your photo albums.
- **Reviews** - Reviews are a great way to boost your visibility on Facebook AND Google. Reviews give immediate boost of trust to anyone that visits your page. If someone is doing their research on you and a competitor, the page with better reviews is likely to win the lead. It is appropriate to ask for a review after completing a conversation with an existing or past customer when they are feeling satisfied. It has been deemed unethical to bait customers with gifts for reviews e.g. Starbucks gift cards or the like.
- Likes - Likes should be counted in quality, not quantity. It takes one person to buy. One million users might like a page, but if they never buy, they do no good. It is about measuring the engagement with the community that surrounds your business. Be grateful for every LIKE you get and in no time you’ll be racking up the fans.
- Videos - This tab will show you all of your videos. Only videos that you have uploaded.
- Posts - This tab will show you posts made by your page AND posts made by visitors. It is important to check the posts made by visitors every now and again. This is part of customer service feedback and LISTENING.
- Third Party Apps - Many third-party platforms integrate with Facebook. You can add special tabs that do a lot more than Facebook’s standard Page apps (like all the tabs above). Do some research and see if there are any appropriate tabs for your page. Don’t add too many and try to avoid apps with redundant features. Your fans will get confused. Keep it simple and easy to tell what each tab does. Some examples of third party tabs/apps are:
 - Yelp
 - MailChimp
 - YouTube
 - Contests
 - [Ask me](#) about custom apps for your Facebook page.
- Insights - These are analytics for your Page. They can offer data like demographics of your page’s fans and visitors, most active times, most engaging posts, etc. Take some time to explore your Insights. If applied strategically, this data can drastically improve your marketing efforts!

Twitter

Twitter has been in a state of flux for a few years, going through a bit of an identity crisis. Despite this, the platform is still going strong. While it may not have dedicated users like Facebook, the users that are dedicated truly love the platform and others on it. Use this to your advantage when engaging on twitter.

Retweets

The retweet function allows you to forward someone else's tweet to your followers. You can retweet tweets that resonate with the organization's mission, industry, or location. You can even append your own message to the retweet. This allows you to frame why you retweeted this tweet to your followers. You could also use that message as a way to tweet at the account you are retweeting a tweet from while you are retweeting the tweet.

Hashtags

The lifeblood of Twitter. Unless you are talking directly to your followers, it's always good to use a hashtag in your tweets. Use as many as you want, as long as they are all related to the tweet. Hashtags are a GREAT way to get found and noticed on Twitter. They help you cut through the noise. You can also use hashtags to find accounts you're interested in. Find customers by searching for related keywords like your location and the service you offer. There might be someone talking about your hashtags right now! Use the search bar to search for not only hashtags but strings of words too. This can uncover some truly meaningful connections.

Trending Topics

Here's where you can use your expertise to get noticed and make a difference. If you see something related to your business is trending, check out the hashtag conversation. Get an idea of what people are saying and asking, then craft a tweet that offers some insight or provides an answer. Trending topics could be about you industry or location.

Photos

Twitter's photo sharing capabilities have always been a little behind. Granted, they're not a visual network, their main use is sharing text information. Now that Twitter supports images and even multiple images, it's nice to add a visual aid to a tweet every now and then. Tweets with photos will almost always get more attention simply because they take up more screen real estate. Add a hashtag to a tweet with an image and you're sure to get noticed.

Video

You can now add up to 20 second videos to a tweet. Twitter integrates with Vine seamlessly, so take advantage of both Vine and Twitter communities when appropriate. Videos always catch my attention on Twitter, and the 20 second limit keeps it at a polite limit. It also forces you to get your message across in a short amount of time, just like the short amount of characters in a tweet.

Twitter Ads

While Twitter ads can be appealing, I would suggest keeping a realistic perspective when working with a smaller budget. Twitter Ads can be powerful, but only for very specific niches, strategic marketing campaigns, and/or organizations with huge budgets. Twitter Ads can be a fun way to get some followers or promote a local event, just consult a professional before placing any Twitter Ads.

Following

A list of users you are following. Try to keep a ratio of more followers than following. Only follow accounts that:

- a. You truly love and want to follow
- b. Are powerhouses in your industry
- c. Can offer your competitor insight
- d. Have engaged you multiple times

Don't follow an account simply because they follow you. You want your follow to matter. If you follow everyone, there's nothing special about you following an account. I am always happy to see cool, popular accounts following me. But if I see that they have an equal follower/following ratio, the special feeling is diminished. Take care when following. Plus, you want to LOVE everything that comes through your feed. If you follow everyone, you will get a ton of noise and miss the tweets that actually matter. Follow with care.

Followers

The lifeblood of your Twitter existence. Your followers are the ones that will spread your message far and wide. Your followers are your fans on Twitter. Respect your followers. You don't have to love what they do or say, but love them because they love you if for no other reason. Thank everyone that follows you, if you feel it is appropriate. Mention one follower every day. Check in on your followers. See what they are saying. You don't need to follow them to see their timeline. If you see anything even remotely related to your industry on their Twitter feed, reply or retweet. Be grateful for every follower. Followers will come and go. The number will fluctuate. Just keep tweeting and your followers will slowly but steadily rise. You may even get a retweet or mention by a big account and collect a hundred or one thousand followers over night! It's uncommon but not unheard of! Be yourself. Like on all social media platforms, being yourself (your brand) is the key to attracting die-hard followers, fans and customers.

Unfollowing

There are tools that you can use to uncover inactive followers. This is just one example of an unfollowing tool. You can also unfollow accounts that aren't tweeting about relevant topics. There is no need for a florist to follow a car dealership, unless there is a partnership or interaction going on there. Unfollow liberally. You can always follow someone again if you want.

Buying Followers

DO NOT BUY FOLLOWERS. There is no legit way to buy followers. There will always be consequences whether empty, inactive followers, a bad follower/following ratio, or punishment by Twitter. Buying followers was cool for a while, but those days are gone. If any "get more followers" deal sounds too good to be true, it is. The only followers worth having are those that have followed on their own accord. It means they care about your brand enough to sign up for your updates. Quality, not quantity.

Profile Content

It is crucial to include hyper-informative text in your Twitter profile. Include a broad overview of what your organization does (slogan), and a call to action. There are dedicated fields for location and website link. Make sure to fill these out!

Profile Design

Twitter gives you the opportunity to match your profile colors to your branding kit. Use the same colors on Twitter as in your logo or on your website. This enforces brand recognition throughout the web and across social media accounts. It is best practice to create images that perfectly fit the dimensions set by Twitter. This will ensure your profile design appears the same across all devices. Use the banner image to show off a really great photo or promote a current marketing campaign. Use your profile image to brand your account. Your profile image should be your logo or a photo that relates to your industry AND your logo somewhere on the image.

Instagram

Instagram allows you to share images and videos on the most visually-centric social media platform out there. You can get lots of exposure by appending hashtags to your posts. Even more exposure than Twitter. Instagram's audience is massive and is used by people of all ages. Even though SnapChat is the king of tween communication, Instagram is a close second. Parents are now getting on Instagram, even if it's to keep track of their kids!

Visual Content

1. Images - You can create moments right in the app by taking video or photo with the in-app camera or load content created elsewhere, like images created on your computer or edited on your phone.
2. Video - Instagram now lets you upload videos up to 60 seconds in length. This is huge! Videos can autoplay in Instagram, depending on a user's app settings. Use video on Instagram to your advantage. Capture intimate, fun, wild or informative moments that happen at your business. Share professionally produced clips or short films about your business or industry. The possibilities are endless. You can even stitch multiple clips together from your phone's photo album to create a mini film right on your phone. Always shoot and share in high-def. Consider that your video will be seen on a mobile device. That means you need to really focus on your subject, or shoot a clip with a broad focus. Users need to know exactly what is going on in your video or they will keep scrolling through their feed after a few seconds.
3. Filters - Instagram was made famous by it's cool, trendy, hip photo filters. The filters were most impressive when phone cameras were still developing and low resolution. Now that our phone cameras rival real cameras, filters are more of a personal touch. Choose a filter that accents the image OR don't use a filter at all. Filters are by no means necessary for every post!
4. Image Editing - Some time in the past two years Instagram added not only a ton of new filters but a native in-app photo editor. You can now edit the brightness, contrast, saturation and many more properties of your images right in Instagram. Play around with these sliders - you'll get used to them and soon enough you'll be turning your mobile photos into pro-looking content that your followers (and the Instagram community) will love!

Text Caption

What you say to accompany a photo can mean the difference between someone following and not following. Put considerate thought into the text that accompanies your image. Be as specific as you can if you are describing a moment in time. Use words that bolster the overall vibe of the post. It's all about connecting with the viewer. Tell a story that will pull at their heartstring. Include a testimonial about your business. Sometimes it is appropriate to refer users to visit the link in your profile if you are promoting something specific. It's not only nice, but powerful to mention other accounts in your posts. If there is a person or organization pictured in your post, @mention them in the text caption AND tag them in the photo. You will also want to include hashtags in your text when appropriate.

Hashtags

Hashtags may be even more powerful on Instagram than Twitter. It's good practice to always include one or two hashtags, IF appropriate. Instagram lets you use up to 30 hashtags on a single post. When growing an account, it's best practice to include all 30 hashtags in your text content. This will help maximize exposure to relevant users. Use hashtags that relate to your business, are trending, or refer to your location. First come up with three hashtags to build from. You can expand those three to six hashtags by adding additional words, making plurals, adding locations, or any kind of additional classifier. Now you have six. Expand upon those six and then you will have 12. Usually you'll get ideas for more and more hashtags once you get into the flow of classifying your post. It becomes easier the more you do it. We highly recommend checking out [@Foundr's Instagram account](#). They are some of the best Instagram marketers and you can learn a lot about growing your account from them.

Location Tagging

It's always good to tag your business as your location when posting photos or videos that were taken on-site at your business. If you are sharing a photo that has a related location, tag it. You can add a location by tapping the little location icon at the top of your post, right before you actual publish it. Other people can see all of the photos taken at a specific location. Tagging your photos with a location gives your account exposure to all of the people look at photos taken at that location.

Instagram Stories

Instagram's newest feature was just released to compete with Snapchat. Instagram Stories are super short videos clips or images that post to a "story." Each clip or image post expires after 24 hours and is no longer accessible to anyone. However, you can download and save stories to your phone. Use Stories to share ephemeral information, share play-by-play updates of an event you are hosting or attending, or capture moments throughout the day at your business. Stories also let you doodle and draw on your photos and videos. You can add text and emojis too!

Followers

Just like Twitter, your followers are your lifeblood. You want to thank them, praise them, and keep tabs on what they're up to. You want to try to keep a healthy ratio of more followers than following. Check out what your followers are up to. Comment on their photos, like their photos and send them DMs (if appropriate.)

Following

The same rules apply to following accounts on Instagram as on Twitter, and pretty much every other social network. Only follow accounts you REALLY want to follow. Don't follow for vanity, don't follow because they followed you. Follow accounts that have engaged with you or that you love. This will help curate your Instagram feed so you love everything that comes through it!

Profile Image

Choose the same profile image that you use on all of your social media accounts. Refer to the Twitter section for details for profile picture ideas.

Profile/Bio Content

Keep it short and to the point. Use emojis where appropriate. Include your slogan and/or a concise description of your service. You also have the option to add a location and hyperlink. Make sure to fill out both fields. You can temporarily change your hyperlink if you want people to visit a webpage associated with a specific post. You may have seen some accounts add the words "link in bio" to some of their captions. This is the best and only way to send users to a link on Instagram.

CTA (Call To Action Button)

Instagram recently rolled out the ability to convert your account into a *business account*. This gives you a few benefits: insights (analytics), a call to action button, and the option to display the category of your business. Use the call-to-action button just like you would use the Facebook call-to-action button. We suggest setting it to email you directly or send users to a contact form. The type of call-to-action depends on the campaign you are running or the strategy of your Instagram. We can help you decide which call-to-action to use.

Popular Posts

Here's where Instagram shows popular images from their entire platform. Similar to trending topics on Facebook and Twitter, the discover / popular posts tab of Instagram lets you find popular conversations to insert your company into. Like, comment and follow appropriate posts and accounts. This kind of activity will help grow your fan base on Instagram.

Unfollowing

Same rules apply here as they do for Twitter. Unfollow liberally. If an account is not posting content that aligns with your brand or is posting content that turns you off, unfollow. Only follow when you truly believe your brand is aligned with the account. Remember, all of Instagram can see who you are following. They will judge you on who you are following whether they realize it or not. Who you follow is a direct reflection of your organization.

Direct Messaging

A pretty convenient feature. You can send and receive photo, video and text-only messages directly from individual users on Instagram. You have to accept incoming messages, so check the little inbox in the top right of the app every so often. This is where you access your messages.

Conclusion

If you've read this far, you're more well-equipped than most people ever will be to manage a successful social media presence. Social media is always changing, so this handbook should not be considered the end-all be-all. Social networks are always changing, updating and upgrading. Sometimes they fail and new ones are always popping up. It is important to be flexible and open to trying new things to stay ahead of the game on social media. Don't be afraid to ask questions and ask for help. Once you become steadily active, you will find a social media community developing. That's where the term Community Manager comes from. If you follow the advice in this handbook and add in your own personal or brand inspiration, you'll be making great waves on social media in no time.

Contact me at Chad@CDL500.com with questions, comments or contributions!

Thank you and good luck. You'll be great.