



SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING SECRETS FOR THE LOCAL BUSINESS

By SEO is Local

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Introduction

Not only have most businesses heard about social media marketing, but most businesses are already utilizing it to their advantage. So many in fact, that it's surprising for a customer when they learn that there are certain businesses that don't have a Facebook page, Twitter profile, or other form of social media platform.

So why aren't these businesses utilizing social media marketing?

Maybe they aren't aware of the many benefits this type of marketing holds. Or maybe they're simply intimidated about doing it, and think there's no way they can create beautiful social media content that compares with other campaigns they've seen. Maybe they just think that they don't have the time to dive into something that will take them away from running their business.

If you're one such business, this report is for you.

It will outline the many benefits that you're missing out on if your business doesn't have a social media presence. And it will give you the necessary resources to get your own profiles up and running; as well as the tips and tricks you can use to make social media marketing work best for you.

If you're not already on social media, or you are but you're not yet using it for your business, there's no time to waste. So read on to learn how it can help your business, and how it can help your profits soar.



Social Media Marketing vs. Social Media Advertising

Social media of course, is a simple phrase that refers to a wide array of many different sites aimed at providing different social interactions. The many different social media sites also allow business owners to use different actions depending on what will best suit their purpose.

For instance, Twitter is a social media site that allows people to share short messages with each other. Facebook on the other hand, allows people to provide long-form content from blog posts to creating and joining events, while Pinterest and Instagram are both image-heavy sites where businesses can share their very best photos.

All social media sites encourage engagement and interaction between the creator of the account and their audience. Social media engagement is all about the creation of content, whether that's a video, a picture, or a link to a blog post, and then having followers engage with that content. They can do so by liking it, sharing it, and commenting it. That's really where the power of social media lies.

But in addition to overall engagement, there are two forms of promotion that businesses can utilize on social media. Those are social media marketing, and social media advertising.

Social media advertising is the actual planning and buying of ads on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. They can be considered somewhat passive because users don't necessarily look for the ads, but instead they appear in feeds and in videos. These ads are planned and purchased, with specific timeframes for the different campaigns.

Social media marketing incorporates social media advertising for those businesses that wish to use it, but it's a more general term used to include actual advertising and social media engagement. So while an ad would be considered a part of a company's social media marketing plan, so too would a blog post that's been shared with the hopes of sparking conversation.

Once you understand the differences between advertising, engagement, and marketing, you then just need to learn what the benefits are to truly understand what social media marketing can do for you.

Top 9 Benefits of Social Media Marketing

Truthfully, there are so many potential benefits local businesses can gain from using social media marketing that listing all of them would be virtually impossible. Instead this section will focus on just the top nine benefits that any business can gain simply from using social media marketing.

Make it Personal

Even local companies that aren't major corporations can sometimes lose their personal touch when it comes to reaching out to their customers. And even the independent businesses that make up so many towns and cities can sometimes seem, to customers, as faceless entities that are only out for

making a profit. It's a problem that can be hard for businesses to combat, but social media marketing makes it so much easier.

Social media puts a name and a face to any business. Customers can head over to a Facebook page or Instagram profile and actually see the faces of people that make up the business, and even learn their names. They can become familiar with a YouTube channel that always has a person from the business showing how to use their products or answering some common questions.

When this happens, a business instantly becomes more personal to the consumer. That builds trust and that trust is what's going to make it more likely that the consumer will head over to your business when they need a product or service, rather than go to a faceless competitor.

Increase communication

Just like local businesses still run the risk of appearing faceless to local consumers, they also run the risk of being unreachable. Local businesses can still become too busy to answer their phone when a customer calls, and those customers can still sometimes call after store hours, meaning no one will be there to take their call. This can be very frustrating to customers when they have a problem that needs to be solved, and no one to help them.

Enter social media, which once again can be a great help. When a business has a social media presence, customers just have to head over to their page and ask a question or leave a comment. Business owners can check the page, even when they're not actually in the business, and reply to customers quickly and easily. Customers will appreciate it, and businesses will also reap the benefits of it because customers will feel better about using a business that actually cares about them and their concerns.

Collect testimonials

A business can continuously tell their customers how great they are, and that might help to lure some customers into the business. But hearing about how great your business is from someone else is going to have a much more powerful impact, and can turn potential customers into new customers. This is why testimonials are so coveted by businesses. And social media marketing can help businesses get those testimonials.

This is because customers don't even have to go onto review sites to leave a testimonial or positive feedback. A tweet that says, "My shipment came so fast!" or "Thanks for all the help at the store today!" can be shared or retweeted and used as a testimonial. Not only will your followers see the original post, but you can also use it to reach out to people that may not be following your brand, particularly if you become savvy in the art of using great hashtags or if you tag someone else in the post.

Boost brand awareness

Brand awareness may just seem like another marketing buzz word, but it's an important part of marketing for any business. Boosting brand awareness is simply getting the word out about your business, and making more people aware of the product or service you offer, and the ideology behind your business. Many businesses use other forms of marketing to do this including television ads, print



advertising, and radio, but many of these are too expensive and time-consuming for the local business.

But social media marketing is a great fit for all local businesses. By simply having a presence on several social media sites, customers will already be looking for a business, and it will be easy for them to find what they're searching for. By naturally being placed with others in the same space, brand awareness will soar. And if there aren't any others in the same space, or there are but they're not utilizing social media properly, your business can stand out in a crowd. All of this builds loyalty and long-term customers, which is what every business is after.

Become the authority

Every business owner wants their customers to know that they know the most about their product or service. They want them to know that they are the authority, or the experts, in the field, so that it simply doesn't make sense for customers to go to somewhere else. And social media can help businesses do that.

By posting blog posts, tutorials, and industry news, businesses can easily set themselves apart from the crowd and quite simply, convey to customers that you really know your stuff. And that you even know it better than your customers.

Learn about your customers

While of course you want your businesses to learn about you, you also want to learn about your customers. That is after all, the only way you're going to be able to market to them more effectively and bring in more profits. And most social media sites will have metrics and analytics that lets you know exactly what customers are coming to your page, when they're coming, and where they're coming from, to name just a few of the most trackable metrics.

This is beneficial to businesses because they may see that people in nearby towns are interested in their services, so they'll know to expand other advertising efforts into that town. Business owners can also see what social media posts are getting the most likes and clicks, so they can continue to publish similar content.

Target your market

Most business owners already know who their target market is. So how can social media help? Because even when businesses know who makes up their target market, it can still be difficult for them to actually target that market. So if a business owner knows that they're targeting millennials, they may send out a blast promotion not really knowing if that message is getting to their target market.

But social media takes out all the guesswork. On platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, as a business owner you get to simply check off boxes that correlate to your target audience and be guaranteed that the target market will hear the message. It's really that easy.



Improvement of SEO

The search engines are of huge importance to any business owner. After all, if a customer goes online to search for a business, product, or service, they're probably going to use a search engine to do it at some point. And when you're relying on your own website alone, it can be terribly difficult to try and get into those top spots of Google. But when you use social media, and even better, multiple social media platforms, you have a much better chance of getting to those top spots. The search engines love social media sites and will give the profiles on them better ranking. So customers will be able to find you more easily, more quickly, and get into your business to learn more about what you have to offer.

Save your marketing budget

Marketing can cost a lot. Most business owners will agree that marketing takes up a large portion of their budget, and that marketing can greatly eat into their profits.

Luckily, social media marketing costs little to nothing. Creating a profile on most social media sites is free, and even platforms such as Instagram will provide a business profile for absolutely free. So you can still start taking advantage of engaging with your customers and learning more about each other without paying a thing. And while actual ads on social media platforms will cost you something, you get to choose exactly what that price is. So you only need to spend what you can comfortably afford, and not a penny more.



What Businesses Should Be Using Social Media Marketing

All business owners know that there are no hard and fast rules for what will work for any one business. Even when in the same industry, all businesses have different goals, different budgets, different people running that business, and different concerns. With this in mind, what businesses should be using social media marketing?

Truthfully, any business that wants to reap all the benefits it has to offer. And essentially, that's just about any business. Of course all businesses want to learn more about their customers, engage more with them, and boost their own brand awareness. And with that in mind, social media marketing is suitable and should be used by every single local business.

But there is a caveat to that. That's not to say that Facebook ads are going to be effective for every business, or that creating a YouTube channel will work the same way for every business. Business owners will have to look into each one, learn about each one, and do what makes sense for them, and what they think will be most effective for them.

But the fact of the matter is, that every business needs to be on social media. It's one of the things that sets it apart from other forms of marketing - it *will* be effective for every single business, regardless of the type of social media marketing that's used.

With that in mind, business owners do need to look further into each social media site to learn what will work best for them. And the next section will help you do it.



Choosing a Social Media Site

Getting started on social media can seem daunting for business owners. There can be a lot of things to consider, and a lot of questions are asked. One of the biggest questions asked by business owners is what social media platform they should be on. There are so many out there, how does a business owner even know where to start? The best way to do it is by narrowing it down to the most popular, and then determining which one will provide the business with the most exposure to the right audience.

Determine where your audience is

If you start out on a social media platform that your target audience doesn't use, you might find that you extend a lot of effort for very little return. It's not a case of you start posting and they will come. Instead, you need to go to them and start posting in a place where they will be able to find you and see those postings.

So how can you start finding out? A simple customer survey could work, particularly if you used it in something like an email marketing campaign or a short survey they can fill out in-store. Some social media platforms will also tell you the size of the audience you can expect to reach. So with a little research and actually spending a few minutes within a site, you may be able to easily gauge whether or not it's a site your customers are hanging out on, or whether you need to move on to another.

Determine what type of content you'll be creating

The chances are good that you already have an idea of the type of content you want to create. Maybe you've taken pictures at an event and thought about how great they would be to share online. If that happens often, Instagram may be the social site you want to focus on. If you regularly have blog posts that you think are truly great and you want to share them, a site like Facebook or LinkedIn might be better for that.

The point is that different types of content will work better and more effectively on certain social media platforms. So once you've determined where your audience is, you then need to determine where your content will work best.



Matching Your Goals and Audience with a Platform

Once you've determined your goals, audience, and the kind of content you want to share, you then need to match all of them with the right platform that will put that content in the best light, and be most effective with the audience. And to do that, you'll need to know a little bit about those platforms. To help you with this step the most popular social media platforms, their main audience, and what type of content works best on them are listed below.

Facebook

While other social media sites might seem all the rage, Facebook is still the largest with over 2 billion monthly active users. Most of these, 61 percent in fact, are Americans between the ages of 25 and 54.

Facebook is a great tool for lead generation, and the advertising options it offers allow business owners to highly target their market. It's also a great site for creating relationships with new and potential customers and turning leads into devout followers.

Facebook is also a great place for many different types of content whether you want to share blog posts, tell people about an event, or share a picture or video. But it's important to remember that people log onto Facebook to relax in a casual and friendly environment. Because of this, keep your tone light and take the opportunity to show the creative side of your company.

It's also important to remember that while Facebook may be the largest social networking site, that also means it's going to have the most competition.

To get started on Facebook, go here:

<https://www.facebook.com/business/overview>

Twitter

Most Twitter users are under the age of 50 and are looking for content that is easy to digest, and that can be enjoyed very quickly. The news feeds of Twitter users become clogged very quickly so business owners have to make sure that their post is concise. Quotes, how-to articles, and listicles all work very well on Twitter. And while the social media platform does allow business owners to share pictures and videos, these don't work as well on Twitter as they do other platforms.

Twitter does revolve largely around communication so in addition to telling customers about specials and news, be sure to include some fun and quirky tweets, too. Also make sure you're responding to customers' comments and questions; and if anyone says anything good about your company, make sure to retweet it.

To get started on Twitter, go here:

<https://business.twitter.com/en/basics.html>



LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a vastly underrated social media platform, largely because it's seen as the stuffy, boring site compared with the many other fun ones. But it doesn't have to be stuffy or boring, and business owners can capitalize on the fact that not all businesses will venture over to LinkedIn. LinkedIn is especially effective for B2B businesses, and can be a great place for networking.

Of course because of these factors, LinkedIn users are typically more professional than on other sites. There are also more users between the ages of 30 to 49 than there are users under 30. So if your target audience is made up mostly of millennials, LinkedIn may not be where you want to spend most of your time.

LinkedIn is a great place for long-form content whether it's a blog post, a tutorial, or a press release. It's also a great place to post job openings as many users head over to LinkedIn when they're in the middle of job hunting. Recommendations on LinkedIn can make a business seem more reliable and credible; and providing answers in the Questions section can help businesses establish themselves as an expert in the field.

To get started on LinkedIn, go here:

<https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/710/creating-a-linkedin-company-page?lang=en>

Pinterest

Pinterest is a social media site that focuses on pictures, and it's one that is mainly used by women. 81 percent of Pinterest users as a matter of fact, are female. The average age of Pinterest users is 40, but most of the active pinners are under 40. And, Pinterest may be one of the breakthrough social media platforms, with millennials now spending almost as much time on this social media site as they do Instagram (which is a lot)!

Because Pinterest is all about the pictures it's best used by businesses in retail, decor, food, art, fashion, wedding, and travel, but it can still be used by just about any business. That's because with each pin, pinners have a chance to include a link that can direct users to a business' web page. So sharing blog posts or details on a business website about a new contest can be done, so long as there's a dynamic picture to go with it.

To get started on Pinterest, go here:

<https://business.pinterest.com/en/get-started-how-to-use-pinterest>

Instagram

Instagram has become known as the social media site for millennials, and there's a reason for it. 59 percent of Instagram users are between the ages of 18 and 29, with 33 percent being aged 30 to 49. But the numbers in other demographics are also climbing on Instagram, so it may be useful for any business.

Of course, like Pinterest, Instagram focuses on pictures, but videos are also very popular on Instagram. Because of this, business owners that want to share a video will find they have much



more success on Instagram than they do on other social sites. Instagram Stories can also create a sense of urgency, as they're only visible for 24 hours before they disappear.

Also like Pinterest, the majority of users are women so any business owner trying to reach women need to be on Instagram.

To get started on Instagram, go here:

<https://business.instagram.com/getting-started>

YouTube

Instagram may be useful for sharing videos with users, and Facebook can be another great place to do it. But there's no denying that YouTube is the first place business owners should go if they want to share a video. Not only can these videos be shared with subscribers to the channel, but the link can also be copied and shared on other social media sites.

The biggest mistake most business owners make when creating a video for YouTube is that they try to create one that will go viral. Of course, it's great if that happens, but the truth is that the chances of that happening are pretty small. Videos should be fun and creative, but in addition to being entertaining they also have to provide some value to users. How-to videos are one of the best types of videos business owners can upload, and a Q&A session with questions from real people are also very good.

YouTube is also one of those social media sites that all business owners should be on because everyone uses it. The majority of users, 26 percent, are between the ages of 35 and 44, and the other age groups are very near that number, too.

To get started on YouTube, go here:

<https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/1646861?hl=en>

The above six social media sites are definitely the largest and most popular, but that doesn't mean that there aren't others that might be useful for your business.

The Best of the Rest

It is recommended that to get started in social media marketing, business owners start with at least one of the previous six in order to get their brand name out there. But they definitely are not the only ones, and business owners may be able to get a lot out of others, too. And it's for that reason, we've broken down for you the best of the rest.

Snapchat

Snapchat, like Instagram, is a social media and networking site that is particularly popular with the younger crowd. But that doesn't mean that business owners can't use it. Many businesses do so they can show a more creative side of their business and have fun with their followers.

Snapchat is a great place to share videos and images with followers, but it is unique from other sites that do this because posts are only visible for ten seconds once a user sees them. Pictures can also be drawn on using the virtual tool, and of course, Snapchat filters are what made them famous - and are another way businesses can show customers their fun side.

To get started on Snapchat, go here:

<https://accounts.snapchat.com/accounts/signup>

Flickr

Flickr is another social media platform that focuses on beautiful photographs. But it's unlike Instagram and Facebook because you won't see pictures of a friend's lunch or silly candid pictures. Instead, the pictures on Flickr are of professional, or near-professional quality, and are some of the most gorgeous users will ever see. Business owners can take advantage of this by sharing their very best photos, and even hiring a professional photographer to take the most beautiful pictures of their business or the products or services they sell.

To get started with Flickr, via Yahoo, go here:

<https://login.yahoo.com/account/create>

Reddit

Reddit may not look like much on its surface, but don't discard it just yet. Reddit has sometimes been described as a comments section in a social media format. Reddit users, called Redditors, publish content that can then be liked and shared with other users.

The best way for business owners to start using Reddit is to create a profile and then jump in leaving comments, posting links, and leaving upvotes or downvotes for content. Without any of this, there would be no Reddit so it's good to become familiar with this backbone of the social media site.

To get started on Reddit, go here:

<https://www.reddit.com/login>



Tumblr

Tumblr is very user-friendly and is a great social media site for any business owner that wants to share their blog posts or other lengthy written content. But it's also very effective for those that want to share images or video. Tumblr also has chat options and a dashboard that allows business owners to easily share blog posts, or even just portions of blog posts that encourage users to visit the blog to check out the post in its entirety.

To get started on Tumblr, go here: <https://www.tumblr.com/register>



Social Media Marketing Tips

So by now you may know what the most popular social media sites are, along with some of the smaller sites. And you may know that in order to use them most effectively, you should be sharing blog posts, web pages, images, and videos. But still, once you land on a social media site, you may wonder just what exactly you're supposed to do there. If that happens, here are some tips that will help you along the way.

- Make a plan. This doesn't just mean knowing your target audience (you should) and knowing the type of content you should share (you also should), but you should also perform some keyword research, competitive research, and brainstorm specific ideas that you can draw on when you're in the thick of social media.
- Post valuable information regularly. Content reigns supreme, even on social media. So whatever it is that you want to share, make sure that it offers value to your customers in the way of infographics, how-to videos, helpful blog posts, or just entertaining images. Also remember to post regularly, or you'll fade from the minds of the very people you're trying to reach.
- Have a consistent brand image. Social media can be great for brand building and awareness, but in order to do it effectively, customers have to know who you are at a glance. This means that you need to be consistent when writing slogans, tag lines, and using logos. Just because every social media site has their own tone and voice, and you may too when using them, doesn't mean that the core elements of your business should change.
- Share links. You should be sharing links to your own blog posts and web pages, but self promotion becomes a little tiring at times for your customers. So make sure that you also include links to other pages that you may find of interest but aren't necessarily tied to your business. Sharing links with outside sources will not only also provide interest to your customers, but will also help establish trust and reliability.
- Track competitors. You can bet your competitors are keeping an eye on what you're doing on social media, and you should be watching what they're doing too. By tracking competitors you can check out the keywords they're using, what techniques they're using that you haven't yet tried, and how well they're working.
- Create a handbook. Most of the time social media will work in a business' favor, but that's not always the case. And things are more likely to take a downward turn if not everyone in the business knows the tone, standards, and practices you want to use. So create a handbook detailing how you want retweets and comments replied to, how new likes should be handled, and other practices you want everyone to be aware of - especially those handling your account.
- Measure your results. There's a good chance you do very little in your business that doesn't get tracked, measured, and documented. And the same should be true of your social media



marketing efforts. There are many social media tracking tools online that will track how many likes and shares you've received, how users are engaging with your content, and provide other valuable insights that will give you some indication as to how you can better your social media efforts.



Conclusion

Social media marketing holds many benefits for any business owner, not the least of which is that it can open the business up to new customers and increase profits. And there are many to choose from. But breaking them down, understanding that each has different benefits to offer and is best suited to certain types of content, can help a business owner make a much better informed choice as to what network will work best for them. And once a business owner gets started on one social media platform, they may find it's not long before they venture out to other platforms and start sharing as much as possible.

