

Top tips for social media success

We know that people are spending more and more time on their phones and a lot of that time is spent on social media apps. We also know that social media users regularly interact with companies they are interested in or already do business with. So not only is social media free but your customers and prospects are already there waiting to hear from you.

Here's some things to think about to get the most out of your social presence:

- Start by deciding what your objectives are. Is it awareness raising of your brand or products? Growing your followers? Do you want to stimulate discussion? Understanding your goals is the first step to social success.
- Identify your target audience: Who are they, what do they do, where are you most likely to reach them? LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram – they all work for slightly different audiences so understanding who you want to reach will help you figure out where to focus your efforts if time is limited.
- Set up business accounts or pages on each platform. Try to make your username or URL as close to your business name as possible so people can easily find you online. Admin rights can be shared with multiple colleagues but make sure the only people who have access to post are people you trust!
- How often you post depends on what your objectives are and the platform you are using. If your goal is raising your profile then you may want to consider posting more frequently than if you want to stoke debate and discussion. As a very rough guide, LinkedIn recommends sharing 20 posts per month, which averages to about once per business day. The average lifetime of a tweet is between 15-20 minutes, after which time your followers' feeds will likely have received enough new posts that yours gets pushed to the bottom – so aim for three to five tweets a day as a happy medium. Facebook prioritises content from friends and family in users' news feeds which makes it harder for brands to get their content in front of their audience, but upping your posting volume won't help. Start with one post a day for at least a month and experiment until you find the sweet spot for your business.
- What to post is also dependent on the platform and your audience. Product promotions, online competitions, sales plugs, data insights, news announcements, videos, thought leadership posts and more can all be in the mix, you just need to find your voice, consider the audience and be consistent. LinkedIn, for example, is designed to be a place for people to connect with other business professionals and network online. What you post there may be very different to the pictorial-led content that Instagram lends itself to.
- The final bit of the puzzle is evaluation. Tracking your progress is one of the most important aspects of any social media strategy. Based on how your posts perform you will be able to make informed decisions about the direction of your campaigns. Exactly how you measure this progress will depend on your goals but could include the number of shares, comments, traffic to your website or even how often the phone rings!