

The Role of
Social Media
in Your Marketing Strategy



Unlock the Power

of Social Media to Build Your Brand

Social media plays a key role in any smart marketing strategy today. It can help you generate leads, reinforce customer loyalty, increase revenue and reach a broader audience. How broad? Nearly **70% of all Americans now use social media**.¹ It's even more popular with younger Americans: **90% of people between 18 and 29 use social media**, and **77% of those between 30 and 49 do**.² In fact, Gen Xers (ages 37 – 52) spend up to six hours and 58 minutes per week on social media, 10 percent more than the coveted Millennial market.³

But not all platforms are created equal. Each works differently and draws a different audience. To maximize the potential ROI for your business, you need to know your target audience and your goals. You also need to understand who's using which platform and how. To help you get started, we'll give you insight in this eBook on how to set up your presence and maximize your efforts, and we'll examine the five most popular platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube.



¹Pew Research Center "Social Media Fact Sheet," January 12, 2017

²Pew Research Center "Social Media Usage: 2005–2015," October 8, 2015

³Media Life Magazine "Shocker: Millennials aren't heaviest social media users," January, 19 2017

But first, contents

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Setting Targets and Goals

To build the most effective, affordable social media strategy, start by answering these three key questions:

- 1 Who do you want to reach?**
(Current customers, a new demographic group or both?)
- 2 What do you want to accomplish?**
(Do you want to increase sales, build credibility, promote a new product or something else?)
- 3 How do you plan to measure results?**
(What Key Performance Indicators—or KPIs—and metrics will you use? Examples include number of click-throughs, likes, shares, retweets, pageviews and conversions—i.e., getting the user to take a certain action, such as subscribing or buying.)

Next, use this eBook to find out who the audience is for each major platform and how they use it. That way you can make sure you're reaching the right people and creating posts that resonate with them.



Establishing a Presence and Content Plan

1 Create a profile that builds your brand.

Once you've decided which platforms to include in your marketing plan, create a strong brand profile on each. Your profile should clearly communicate who you are and what your business is about. It should also tell people what they'll gain by following you.

INCLUDE:

- A high-quality profile picture or logo
- Contact information that's easy to read
- Links to your website or to other social media platforms where you have a presence
- Privacy settings that allow potential customers to see your content

2 Decide who will handle social media marketing for your business.

You can create a campaign in-house, but maintaining your efforts and monitoring results can be labor-intensive. You might want to consider hiring an outside agency to generate content and manage your social media presence, so you can focus on running your business.



Understanding the Platforms



Understanding the Platforms:

Facebook



Primary Purpose

To promote content and encourage sharing among a vast network of users

Demographics

Facebook is the largest social network, with⁴:

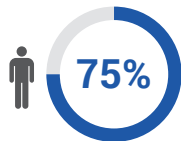


1.23B
active daily users

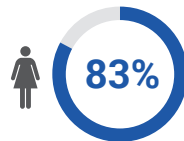


1.15B
mobile daily users

Use by gender⁵:

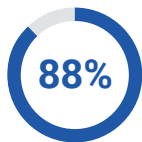


Online men use Facebook

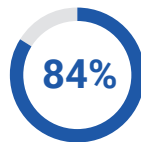


Online women use Facebook

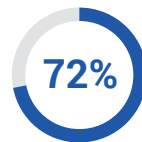
Use by age⁶:



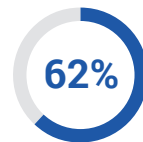
Online adults ages 18–29



Online adults ages 30–49



Online adults ages 50–64



Online adults ages 65+

Best practices

- Facebook is visually driven, so post great photos and videos, and keep text short. Video uploads in the U.S. increased by 94% between 2014 and 2015, so video assets are an important tool.⁷
- Repurpose content with new angles, links or pictures to stay timely and on top of users' newsfeeds.
- Use Facebook's targeting and gating features to make sure your posts reach the audiences that will be most interested in them.
- Consider paying to boost well-performing posts so you can reach new users.
- Encourage sharing by asking people to tag themselves in your pictures. You can also share relevant content from other users.
- Get users engaged with posts that invite interaction. Ask a question, invite users to caption a photo, run a contest, etc.

Best times for posting

- Activity levels are steady throughout the workday.
- Post 5 to 10 times per week between 1 and 3 p.m. for the most shares and likes.

5-10x
per week

⁴ Facebook Newsroom, <http://newsroom.fb.com/company-info/>

⁵ Pew Research Center, "Social Media Update 2016," November 2016.

<http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016/>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ MediaKix, The Facebook Video Statistics Everyone Needs to Know, August 2016

Understanding the Platforms:

Instagram



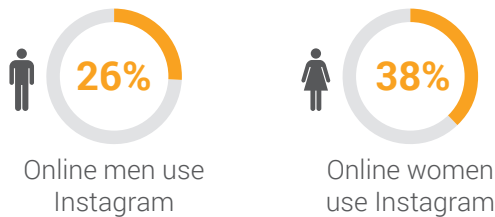
Primary Purpose

Photo- and video-sharing platform that uses strong visuals for storytelling, building brand visibility and calls to action

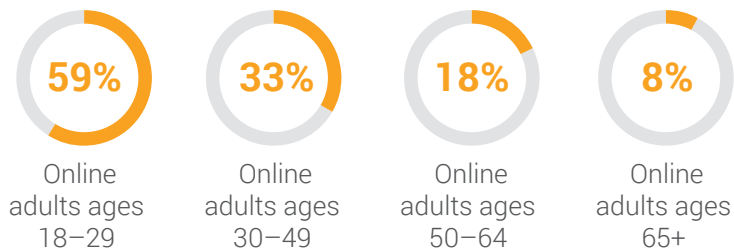
Demographics



Use by gender⁹:



Use by age¹⁰:



Best practices

- It's all about the visuals. Post high-quality images and videos. Use good lighting and interesting composition.
- Learn how to use hashtags to reach bigger audiences.
- Experiment with image formats to add variety to your posts.
- Pay attention to what people share most and do more of those posts.

Best times for posting

- Peak usage times are the end of the workday and late at night.
- Post once a day, every day.¹¹

1x per day, every day

⁸ Instagram, Press News, <https://www.instagram.com/press>

⁹ Pew Research Center, "Social Media Update 2016," November 2016.

<http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016/>

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Social Media Week, "How to Optimize Your Social Media Posting Frequency," 2016.

<https://socialmediaweek.org/blog/2016/03/optimize-social-media-time/>

Twitter



Primary Purpose

Platform for sharing news and views with short posts called tweets, with links to written and video content.

Demographics

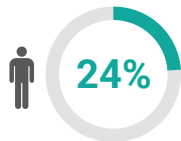


313M
active monthly users¹²

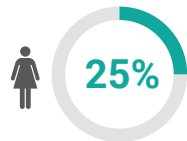


82%
are active on mobile devices¹²

Use by gender¹³:



Online men use
Twitter

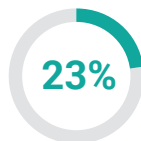


Online women
use Twitter

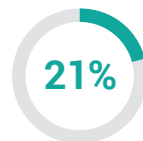
Use by age¹³:



Online
adults ages
18-29



Online
adults ages
30-49



Online
adults ages
50-64



Online
adults ages
65+

Best practices

- Be concise. Twitter recently loosened its original 140-character limit, but brief posts are what appeal to loyalists.
- Use Twitter Cards to stand out. Cards let you include images, video, and audio and download links along with your message.
- Stay on top of trending memes, keywords, and hashtags.
- Use URL shorteners to save space.
- Have a personal voice.

Best times for posting

- Tweets have a relatively short life cycle, so post 3 to 5 times per day, every day.
- For B2B interactions, user engagement is highest on weekdays. B2C levels are highest on weekends.¹⁴

3-5x
per day, every day

¹² Twitter, <https://about.twitter.com/company>

¹³ Pew Research Center, "Social Media Update 2016," November 2016.
<http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016/>

¹⁴ Social Media Week, "How to Optimize Your Social Media Posting Frequency," 2016.
<https://socialmediaweek.org/blog/2016/03/optimize-social-media-time/>

Understanding the Platforms:

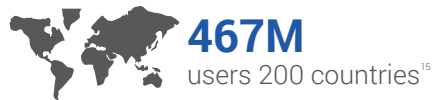
LinkedIn



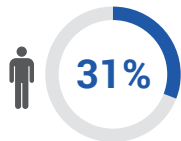
Primary Purpose

Business and employment-focused platform for engaging with job candidates, spreading employer brand awareness and building an audience of potential business partners

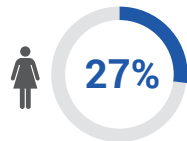
Demographics



Use by gender¹⁶:

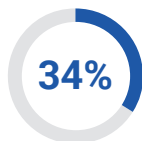


Online men use LinkedIn

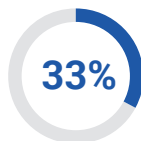


Online women use LinkedIn

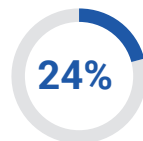
Use by age¹⁶:



Online adults ages 18–29



Online adults ages 30–49



Online adults ages 50–64



Online adults ages 65+

Best practices

- Include compelling copy with a call to action.
- Use engaging images.
- Target specific groups by filtering for things like job title, industry or location.
- Share industry-relevant news items and posts.

Best times for posting

- Post once a day on weekdays.
- Post during the morning rush, when people are getting to work and starting to check their email.

1x per day,
weekdays

¹⁵LinkedIn, <https://press.linkedin.com/about-linkedin>

¹⁶Pew Research Center, "Social Media Update 2016," November 2016. <http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016/>

Understanding the Platforms:

YouTube



Primary Purpose

Video-sharing distribution platform that lets users rate and comment on what they see

Demographics



REACHES MORE

18–49-year-olds on mobile devices than any cable network¹⁷



40 MIN

Average viewing session on mobile¹⁸

Best practices

- Use catchy titles that include keywords and compelling thumbnail images.
- Include links to your website.
- Include a call to action.
- Encourage comments.
- Stay relevant by uploading videos regularly. Consider serialized content to tell a continuous story.

Best times for posting

- Making quality videos takes time, so you can post less often than on other social networks. Do post consistently—for example, one video per week.
- Best times to post are from 2 to 4 p.m., Monday through Wednesday; from 12 to 3 p.m. Thursday and Friday; and from 9 to 11 a.m. on the weekend.¹⁹
- Use other social networks to promote the videos you post on YouTube.

1x per week

¹⁷<https://www.youtube.com/yt/press/statistics.html>;

¹⁸<http://www.businessinsider.com/google-q2-earnings-call-youtube-vs-tv-2015-7>

¹⁹<http://www.tubefilter.com/2015/01/12/best-days-times-to-post-youtube-videos-yearly-calendar/>

Seven Secrets of Effective Social Media Marketing



#1

Create Great Content

Produce unique, original posts with real value for users. Educate them with how-to videos. Inform them with news updates relevant to their lives and your business.

- Post coupons and promotional offers to grab your audience's attention and drive traffic to your business.
- Make it fun. Create quizzes and contests to engage users.
- Make your posts timely.
- Choose words and pictures that trigger positive emotions.
- Include calls to action.
- Encourage users to share your posts.





#2 Use Video

Audiences are **10x more likely** to engage with and share video content than other kinds of social posts. Videos also deliver consistently high conversion rates, making them a potentially critical tool in any campaign.²⁰

- Create videos that match your message and the social media platform audience.
- Make them shareable.
- Have a clear message and call to action early on in your video to avoid audience drop-off.

²⁰ Vidyard, "5 Reasons Video Must be a Part of Your 2016 Marketing Budget," 2016. <https://www.vidyard.com/blog/5-reasons-video-must-2016-marketing-budget/>

#3

Integrate Email

Social media should be part of a multichannel marketing approach. Use social media to drive people to sign up for your email newsletters, and use your email newsletters to direct people to your social media pages.

- Consider third-party email marketing solutions that let you email users who match your target audience and target them with ads on social media that reinforce your message.



#4

Use Digital and Print Display Ads

These ads communicate messages through images and, in the case of digital ads, video and audio as well.

- Use traditional print ads to direct traffic to your social media presence.
- Take advantage of digital display ads to reach a wider audience than content alone.
- Use rich-media content in digital ads—content such as video, audio and click-to-call features that encourages user interaction.

#5

Direct Traffic to Your Company Website

Your website is where you ultimately want consumers to land, whether they need information about your company or want to buy your product.

- Include calls to action that direct traffic to your website in your social media content.





#6

Expand Your Reach with SEO and SEM

Combine SEO and SEM to reach as wide an audience as possible and develop your brand's search equity.

- Use search engine optimization (SEO), which uses keywords to boost your content's organic search performance.
- Boost your reach on social media with a search engine marketing (SEM) strategy. Common SEM tools, such as paid inclusion, paid boosts, pay for placement, link popularity and reputation development, boost the searchability of your social content.

#7

Cross Promote Your Content Across Platforms

Choose the posts most likely to resonate with the demographic groups on each platform.

- Repackage or reformat your content to fit each channel.
- Keep your brand message and look consistent across platforms by using similar colors, a consistent logo and similar tone in your copy.
- Promote your blog or website across platforms.



Four Ways to Make Algorithms Work for You



To get the best ROI, you should know how each social media platform prioritizes business posts.

Platforms evolve often, introducing new algorithms that curate content for users. That means you need to keep up on changes in the way sites direct traffic and post paid content to overcome obstacles.

For example, in June 2016 Facebook started prioritizing posts from family and friends over those from publishers and brands. Instagram, too, recently adopted a new algorithm that prioritizes content in users' feeds based on how likely a post is to pique their interest, how timely it is and the user's relationship to the person posting.

Four Ways to Make Algorithms Work for You

#1

Focus on Engagement

- Rather than promoting products, post useful information people will want to engage with and share. The more they like and share your posts, the more visible your content will be to other users.
- Remember that engagement is a two-way street. Reward customers who communicate with you by sharing and liking their posts and retweeting their photos of your products.



#2

Respond to Complaints

Keep track of customer comments, good and bad, on social media.

If users complain, respond promptly and politely. Turn bad publicity into good by apologizing and offering to fix the situation. Give them a way to continue the conversation off-line. Showing that you care makes others more likely to work with you.





#3

Leverage Analytics

Algorithms promote the content that is receiving the most engagement.

Use analytics to help you figure out what types of content are working best for you on each platform and replicate that success.

For example, if short videos get more views and direct more traffic to your website than other content, post more short videos. If people stop watching after 45 seconds, include a call to action directing people to your website or other content before this point.

#4

Boost Your Posts

Some platforms let you pay to boost your content (have it appear higher in users' feeds).

Figure out which of your nonpromoted posts are doing well organically and boost those. Make sure boosted content is targeted to your desired audience, optimized for the platform and uses proper keywords.



Wrapping It Up

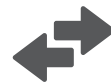
Social media is one of the most powerful ways to market in today's business world. While platforms innovate and evolve constantly, with the right approach you can turn them into opportunities to build brand awareness, identify prospects, convert them into customers and—ultimately—boost your bottom line.

Remember these six basic points:



Know Who, What, How

Know your goals and the audience you need to reach to achieve those goals.



Go Where Your Customers Are

Use the social media platforms that your audience frequents most.



Remember Content Is King

Give users fresh, timely content with real value (education, news, savings, etc.).



Be Social

Engage. Interact. Post questions, quizzes or contests. Reward users for sharing or liking your posts. Share and like theirs. Respond to comments and complaints.



Optimize

Take advantage of email marketing, paid search and SEO best practices to get more return from your posts.



Track Your Progress

Choose KPIs and metrics to measure success, evaluate how your campaigns are doing frequently and make changes as needed.



Thanks

for downloading our eBook!

Remember, if you need help planning or implementing a social media marketing strategy, we're a full-service agency ready to do the hard work for you.

Helping Your Business Succeed With Multi-Channel Marketing

NJ Advance Media has a depth of marketing resources to help you. We are a team of brand strategists, dynamic writers, award-winning creative designers and media producers. We embrace the rapidly evolving digital landscape and are committed to developing new solutions across current and emerging media.

Representing NJ.com, New Jersey's leading newspaper—The Star-Ledger—and additional daily and weekly newspapers in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, NJ Advance Media provides reach of more than 6.3 million people in the New Jersey market per month. In addition to flexible advertising opportunities with the local media, we offer integrated marketing solutions that leverage our first- and third-party data combined with tools such as search, social media, content marketing, video, mobile and display to help you find your best audience. Through a continuous optimization cycle, we help deliver the right message, at the right time on whatever device, screen or publication your audiences are using at that moment.

As part of Advance Local, one of the largest media groups in the U.S., we're leaders in developing innovative and effective solutions for our customers.

Our Solutions

- Audience Targeting
- Content Marketing
- Digital and Print Advertising
- Email Marketing
- Video Marketing
- Search Engine Marketing
- Social Media Optimization
- Creative Services
- Data Analytics



Learn more about our multi-channel marketing solutions by contacting your NJ Advance Media Marketing Solutions Specialist at 732-902-4372 or marketing@njadvancemedia.com.