

16

Social media platforms

In this chapter, you will learn:

- » About the largest and most popular social media platforms
- » How to track, monitor and measure your social media marketing success
- » The best ways to engage with audiences on social media.

16.1 Introduction

Social media is such an ever-present part of our lives, that it is nearly impossible to engage in online activity without coming into contact with it at one point or another. It is also becoming difficult to avoid social media in offline channels as well - consider hashtags and snapcodes on posters, or television shows and ads sending viewers to their social media accounts.

The Internet has changed how we see and engage with media. We can now collaborate, publish, share content and ideas much more easily than ever before, in real time and with people all over the world. All this online sharing and collaboration is facilitated by social media.

In social media's early days, chat rooms and social networks enabled individuals to 'meet-up' online to discuss topics, interact with one another and share their views and ideas. Today social media is so much more, as it plays a key role in the hyper-connected, Internet-dependent world we find ourselves in. It offers immediate content that is relevant to the user, when and where they need it. With social, the longer you take to post about an event or trend the less relevant that content becomes.

This inter-connectedness and real-time nature of social enables marketers to connect with their audience in ways they never could have dreamed of. Social media also provides new ways to address business challenges, such as awareness and conversion and enables small and large businesses alike to grow their business and customer base.

To succeed in social media, you need to understand the basics, such as the various platforms available to you, which objectives social media can help you to achieve and how to create a strategy using social media to achieve these objectives. This chapter will walk you through some of the larger platforms and the following chapter on **Social media strategy** will demonstrate how to use social media strategically to achieve your marketing objectives.

16.2 Key terms and concepts

Term	Definition
Ads manager	An online dashboard provided by Facebook where one can view, edit and access performance reports for campaigns, ad sets and individual ads. With Ads Manager you can view all your Facebook campaigns, track your payment history, make changes to your bids and budgets, export ad performance reports and pause or restart your ads.
Avatar	A manifested online identity on social media and other online communities. An Avatar can be whatever the user chooses and is the personal image the user wants to project to other users.
Blog	Short for weblog. A type of website that allows users (bloggers) to post entries and self-published musings on different topics and which often allows readers to comment on these posts.

Boosted posts	A boosted post is a post such as status updates, photos, videos and offers, that will appear higher in news feeds so that more users will see the post. Posts can only be boosted from a brand or business page. Personal profiles cannot be boosted. The cost of a Boosted post depends on the number of users you want to reach.
Carousel ads	An ad form that allows the brand to show multiple images and/or videos and a link to some action in a single ad. Up to 10 pieces of content can be included. Carousel ads have proven to be much more effective in driving traffic to advertisers' websites from social media platforms.
Cinemagraph	Online photographs, with elements that move, using looped video, published as an animated GIF, or other video format, to give the impression the viewer is watching an animation.
Content	Any items you post online are considered content. This includes status updates, images, posts, videos and any copy. Good content should engage users and build your brand.
Cover image	The main image on a social media page. It needs to catch the attention of the user, be consistent with your brand and encourage the user to read more on the page and engage further with your brand.
Crowdsourcing	Taking a job traditionally performed by a professional and distributing it to an undefined, generally large, group of people in the form of an open call.
Crowdfunding	Funding a project or venture by raising financial contributions from a larger number of people. Kickstarter and Thundafund are examples of crowdfunding platforms that source funds for a variety of projects.
Facebook Business Manager	A service from Facebook that assists with managing access to multiple Pages and ad accounts. The service is ideal for businesses that need different permissions for different people in the organisation.
Forum	A website where users can engage in discussions by commenting on threads or previous posts made.
GIF	Graphics Interchange format is a computer file in the form of a bitmap image that enables short clips of video to be transferred online easily in small file sizes.
Handle	A public username used to identify individual users online, usually on social media. For example, @RedAndYellowEd is the Twitter handle for Red & Yellow.
Hashtag #	A type of label or metadata tag. It is used on social media to label what content is about. It enables content to be searched and discovered more easily.

Hyperlink	A reference to data that users can find by clicking on a link, which will take them to the document or page to which it refers.
Keywords	Words identified as crucial search and advertising parameters. These words are used in copy or posts to optimise discovery and engagement.
Paid media	Any marketing efforts that involve a paid placement. PPC ads, branded content, display ads and promoted and boosted posts are all considered paid media. Paid media involves paying a third party to broadcast your message to others.
Social network	In the online sense, a type of website model where individual members become part of a broader virtual community, where they can share, communicate and collaborate in online commentary and engagement around a shared interest or goal.
Social share buttons	Buttons that appear as small icons adjacent to a blog post, image, article or web page which enable users to share the information via a social media platform, whose icon is indicated by the chiclet.
Tagging	Using a keyword or phrase to group pieces of content together under a specific theme, or assigning a piece of content to another user.
Trend	To trend on social media means your content experiences a spike in popularity on a social media channel.
Viral	When a piece of content is shared in very large numbers it is considered to be viral. There is no exact number of shares that constitute viral. If the number of shares of a piece of content is exponentially larger than the usual number of shares of posts from that specific user, it can be considered to have gone viral.

Table 1.

16.3 Marketing with social media

Social media has changed the world of marketing. Social media is all about the ways in which we create, connect, converse and share content online and can be used as an integral part of an online marketing campaign.

To keep up with increasingly digital audiences, traditional media has had to adapt. This has changed the way content is published, both online and offline, as well as how advertising is sold.

For example, many newspapers now publish their content online as well as in their print publications. Online, they can get instant commentary on their articles, learn what their readers think and use this information to make editorial decisions.

News also comes from citizen journalists; ordinary people who post instant updates to social media about events unfolding around them. Often, news breaks via Twitter users rather than news outlets.

Social media has evolved significantly over the last ten years. Initially, social media was mainly earned media, but brands started to claim ownership of their pages, profiles and channels across the various social media platforms. More and more paid options have also arisen for brands to promote themselves on social media. With an ever-increasing number of players entering the social media space, brands need to spend more and more on promotion on social media for users to see and engage with their content. Social media is a mix of owned, paid and earned media options for marketing. Knowledge of how each of these forms is managed and planned is integral to developing and maintaining a brand.

Working with social media can be broken up into three phases:

1. Strategy
2. Implementation, which includes content creation and community engagement
3. Analytics.

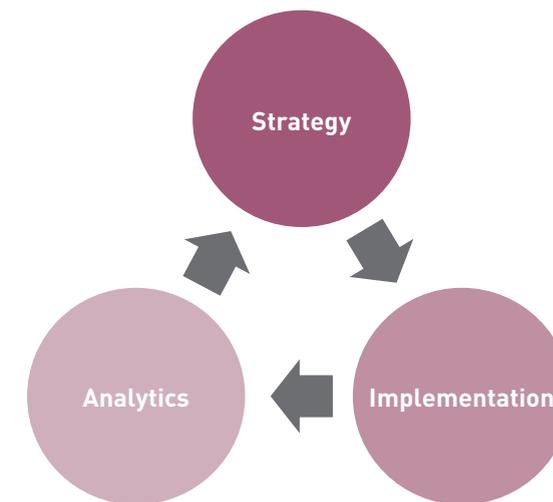


Figure 1. The three phases of working with social media.

The process is cyclical, with the analytics of current content and engagement feeding back into the strategy. Depending on results, this alters the content created and shared, as well as how the brand engages with the community. These changes, in turn, are analysed and the cycle continues.

The next chapter, **Social media strategy**, addresses the strategic use of social media to achieve a variety of outcomes. This chapter focuses on the different social media platforms available to brands. It discusses the key features, marketing and advertising options, as well as how to access and interpret the analytics of the platform and ultimately how to select an appropriate platform for your brand.

16.4 Facebook



Figure 2. The Facebook logo.

16.4.1 Introduction and stats

Facebook has become the most dominant personal social network in the world. As of late June 2017, 2 billion users are now registered on the platform (that is nearly a third of the world's population) and more than 1.2 billion of them are active on Facebook daily. Because users are spending so much time on Facebook, advertisers and marketers want to capitalise on this audience.

Facebook originally presented a means of forming and maintaining online social networks for communities of users who already shared real-world connections, interests and activities. But now, in the realm of social networking, it is unnecessary to have met someone in person to connect with them online. Social networks created new meaning for the term 'friend', with many connections existing solely online. Users can also choose to follow users' public posts without being Facebook friends with them.

Facebook has a number of ways for brands and organisations to use the platform to connect with potential customers. These include business pages, adverts, promoted posts, app promotions and now even direct online sales. Such marketing efforts are especially helpful to small businesses. Facebook enables content creation and distribution and allows brands to engage with their customers in real-time two-way conversations through their 'page'. Facebook is a powerful platform for the implementation of a digital marketing strategy.

Facebook has not only changed social media, it is changing how users access content on the Internet. Many users already receive most of their news and entertainment content through their News Feed on Facebook. Mark Zuckerberg intends to make Facebook the dominant channel through which users access content and online services. In 2014, Zuckerberg announced the plan to take on Google as a search engine and make Facebook the means through which users access the web (Edwards, 2014). It could be argued that Facebook is no longer a social media platform, but a media platform that offers a social community as one of its many facets.

16.4.2 Features

Personal and Brand Pages

Personal profile pages remove much of the anonymity of the Internet. Users of social networks reveal a great deal of information about themselves, from basic demographics such as age, gender and location, to nuanced lists of likes and dislikes. By divulging this information to the network, they are sharing it with the networks' advertisers. For marketers, the accessible personal information is like gold and can be used for targeted marketing. While only de-identified data can be accessed for marketing, users are often unaware of the data that is amassing on their online

profile. For users, this can lead to privacy risks. Social networks do offer privacy management control options for users, but the default setting shares information. Different levels of information control must be activated in user settings.

For brands, a Brand Page is the profile for a brand, organisation or celebrity. It looks very similar to a personal profile and users can choose to connect with a brand on Facebook by liking its Page.

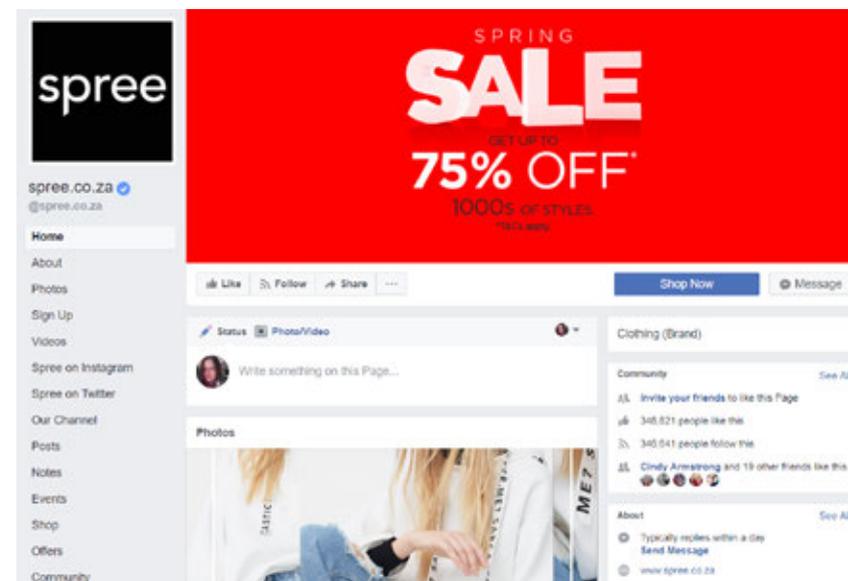


Figure 3. The Facebook Business Page for Spree.

Each Page consists of the following elements:

- A cover/header image, GIF or video (the large banner at the top)
- A profile image that represents the brand
- Buttons to like, share, comment or some other form of call to action
- The 'wall', where the brand's posts and interactions are displayed in a chronological timeline
- Tabs are distinct pages of information on the brand's Page. Tabs can be used to house richer, more graphic content, such as more detailed 'About' pages, photos, videos, services, shop and event news.

Users tend to expect that a credible business would have a Page on Facebook and neglecting a well thought out presence on the network can lead to lost opportunities.

Reaction buttons



Figure 4. Reaction button icons.

NOTE

To see how much of your data is being shared publicly on Facebook, click on the three dots on the bottom right of your cover image and click 'View as' to view your profiles as an anonymous viewer. Are you surprised by what you see? Each post or share can have a tailored privacy level, either to friends, public or a custom audience.

NOTE

Read more about advertising on Facebook and other social media channels in the chapter on Social media advertising.

The Facebook Reaction buttons allow users to share their feeling about a certain piece of content with their social circle. The reactions include the original iconic 'Like' button, 'Love', 'Haha', 'Wow', 'Sad' and 'Angry'.

The Like button can also be used on websites outside of the Facebook ecosystem, which allows visitors to recommend this site and content easily and spot if their friends have liked the same content.

NOTE

The heart, or Love button, as well as the Like button is used to gauge what content users enjoy the most on their newsfeed. The Facebook algorithm then ensures similar content is shown to the user.

The use of the like button is sometimes tracked as a performance indicator for business Pages, to quantify the amount of engagement for a piece of content. Liking content signifies that someone has actively interacted with it, while liking a brand Page does not prove continual or repeated engagement. For this reason the number of likes on a brand Page can be seen as a vanity metric, and not a metric of reach.

Impressions, shares or comments of individual content pieces are much more reliable measures of reach and engagement.

News Feed

News Feed is the term used for the stream of content users see when they log on to Facebook. It's a selection of recent posts and updates from friends and brands with which they have connected on Facebook.

Facebook uses an algorithm to determine what information to show in each user's news feed.

This algorithm is called the News Feed Algorithm. According to an official Facebook update, the following factors are considered by the algorithm before it displays content in a user's news feed:

- **Who posted it?** – If you engage regularly with this person or brand, Facebook will show you more of their content.
- **Type of content** – Whether the content is a photo, article or video can carry different weight in the algorithm.
- **Interactions** – The number of likes, shares and comments.
- **Recency** – When the content was created or posted.

NOTE

The algorithms prioritise paid content from brands over unpaid or organic content. This has made social a pay for play space for brands.

Stories are ordered, or shown at all, according to the relevancy score that is calculated from the factors listed above.

A user is more likely to interact with content that is displayed in their News Feed, so it is vital to ensure that your page content takes this algorithm into consideration.

There are five things publishers can do to optimise their potential for appearing in news feeds. These are:

- Use compelling headlines
- Avoid being overly promotional
- Try a range of media forms and monitor which is most appreciated by the audience
- Use publisher tools to provide Facebook with audience optimisation and audience restriction information (Facebook, 2016b)
- Use boosted posts or paid ads to gain exposure.

When users tag their friends or brand pages in their personal Facebook content, the post will appear on their page wall and it will notify the friend and the brand page. If it is a public post, it could be shown to some of the brand page's fans. This is also true for brands tagging other brands, which is encouraged to increase exposure.

Facebook Connect

Facebook users can conveniently login to services or websites other than Facebook with their Facebook login details by using Facebook Connect. Users can grant permission for profile information to be shared between Facebook and the service they have logged in to.

Facebook Video

Facebook Video allows for the upload of videos directly to Facebook. These videos play automatically and silently (unless clicked on) as users scroll through their newsfeeds. For brands, these videos have visible view counts, which in turn help more users discover them.

To use Facebook Video effectively and ensure high engagement and high rankings on news feeds, content creators should:

- **Focus on quality from the first frame** – lead with imagery and key messaging that will draw attention.
- **Include text overlay if videos include voice overs** – autoplay usually does not include sound and the text overlay ensures the message is not going unheard.
- **Premiere exclusive video content** – show content that is only available to users on your page
- **Provide context** – pull out key quotes as the text component of your post, this helps draw attention and raises expectation of what is to come.

Facebook videos can have calls to action as a button at the end of the video itself or in the post. The video post copy can tag other pages as well (Facebook, 2016).

Facebook Live

Facebook Live allows people, public figures and brands to share live video with their followers and friends on Facebook. It is available to anyone with a page or profile on Facebook. Viewers can react and comment in real time on the video and brands can monitor how the broadcast is going. Facebook Live records the videos as well, which can then be viewed like any other Facebook video. The news feed algorithm has been tweaked to ensure that videos that are actually live at that moment are more likely to be shown in a user's newsfeed (Facebook, 2017). It is a popular tool for brands and influencers and has proven very successful for brands like Starbucks, Kohls and Sephora, as well as influencers like Martha Stewart. Mashable uses Facebook live to release a daily live show (Impact, 2017).

16.4.3 Advertising and marketing with Facebook

Facebook, like many social networks, is free for its members and relies on advertising for revenue. In turn, Facebook offers opportunities for brands to create a presence

NOTE

Because the videos start playing automatically, the view counts on Facebook appear much higher than on other sites and this means that more brands are starting to promote on Facebook Video rather than on YouTube.

NOTE

You can find out more about how these brands have used Facebook Live at: www.impactbnd.com/blog/facebook-live-business-examples

NOTE

People come to social networks to socialise and connect, not to see marketing messages; try to respect this by keeping your presence personal and valuable.

and use the existing social network to connect with and reach out to customers. Its search functionality has opened up dramatically and is becoming more advanced, which means it is providing more and more searchable keyword information for market researchers as well.

Because demographic and psychographic information is collected by the social network, advertisers are able to target their adverts to a very specific audience segment. Facebook ads that use 'conversion' objectives during set up, leveraging pixels to track conversions, remarketing and call to action buttons such as 'buy now', amongst others, are the most effective and can be tracked to monitor your conversion rates.

NOTE

Refer to the chapter on **Social media advertising** for more information on targeting of your audience.

A conversion objective encourages users to take some form of action such as clicking through to your site, signing up for a newsletter, browsing your product catalogues, making purchases and even driving users to visit your brick and mortar store.



Figure 5. Tips for marketing on Facebook.

Brands can run promotions, offers and competitions through their Facebook Pages, but must ensure that they comply with Facebook's terms and conditions. You can access offers at the top of your brand's profile page.

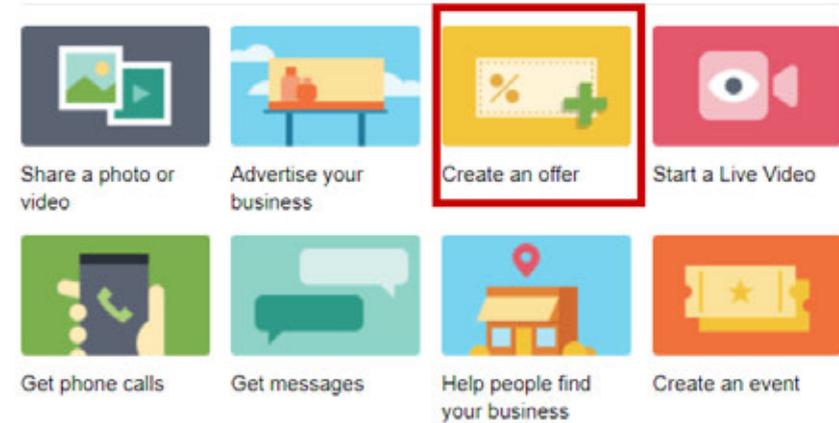


Figure 6. You can create an offer on your brand's profile page by selecting the icon shown above.

Facebook campaign guidelines have become more relaxed and allow users to enter a competition through commenting on a post on Facebook, which does a great job of driving engagement.

Facebook is now a pay to play space, where organic reach has dropped significantly, meaning brands now need to pay to have their content reach users' news feeds.

16.4.4 Selling on Facebook

Facebook is a great tool for education and awareness, which can convert to a sale over time, but up until 2016, this rarely happened through Facebook itself. Users had to click through to the online store via the Facebook page or search for the products on Google and find the online store. Facebook Store, introduced in 2016, enables brands to import their online store onto their Facebook page (www.facebook.com/store.tab), meaning users can shop and purchase without having to leave Facebook.

Facebook is not considered a hard sales platform and is predominantly used for gaining awareness and reach, recruiting leads, or channelling users into a database from which they can be targeted in future marketing, ultimately leading to a sales conversion. At the time of writing, purchases were rarely done directly from Facebook, without the user already being a warm lead, having previously seen a sales-driving advert.

16.4.5 Facebook Analytics

Analytics are the key to informing social media strategy, so monitoring your posts and marketing efforts is essential. Facebook Insights is available to business page administrators. It provides data on how users are interacting with your content and your page. This includes demographic information about the users connecting with your content (age, gender and location breakdown), which tabs and which content posts are seen and interacted with and how many users hide your content from their news feed and when.

With the inclusion of Facebook Video, Facebook also created Video Insights, which provides metrics for video uploads. You can see unique views, duration and audience retention, which helps you to understand how your videos are performing. Video Insights helps you to refine and revise your video strategy.

NOTE

Read more about the Facebook competition regulations here: www.facebook.com/page_guidelines.php

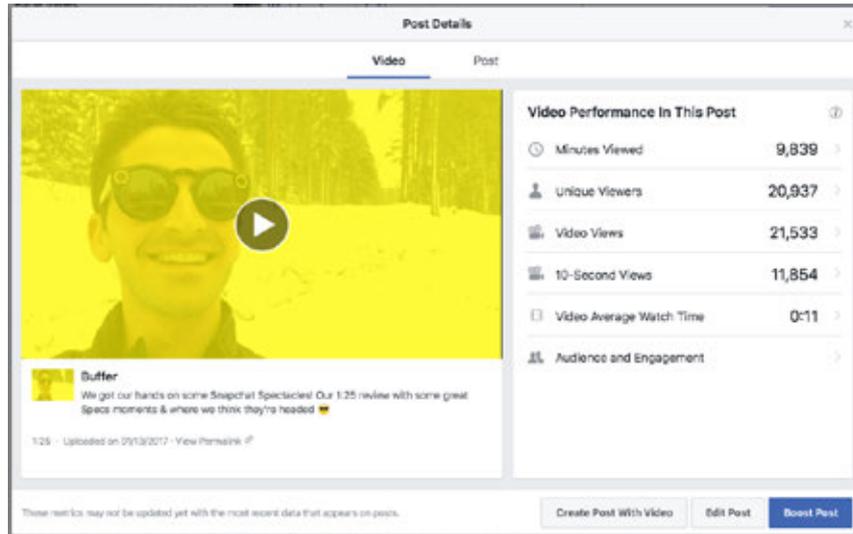


Figure 7. An example of Video Insights for an individual video on Facebook.

16.4.6 Facebook summary

Because of its sheer size, 2 billion users and counting, Facebook is a popular marketing choice for many brands. It offers incredible reach and is particularly powerful for brand awareness. Other social media platforms seem to appeal predominantly to younger markets, while Facebook has a broad appeal across age groups, making it a clear winner for brands who want to market to a more mature audience. The accessible analytics, helpful business tools, diverse ad options and detailed assistance (through www.facebook.com/business) have all helped to make Facebook the number one social media choice for many marketers.

16.5 YouTube



Figure 8. The YouTube logo.

16.5.1 Introduction and stats

Creating and sharing content for free is one of the hallmarks of social media and YouTube is considered the largest of the content creation and sharing websites. The key word here is free: there are no fees for joining, whether you are uploading or viewing content, although premium paid-for membership such as YouTube Red can provide added features. This means that such sites attract an enormous audience. In fact, according to Alexa rankings, YouTube is the second largest website in the world, after Google! (Alexa, 2016). YouTube is now owned by Google and thus has the benefit of receiving prime results in the Google SERP.

YouTube encourages distribution of its content and allows videos to be embedded easily into other websites.



Figure 9. Sharing options on YouTube.

Online video consumption continues to grow year on year as bandwidth gets faster and cheaper. Sharing video content is easy with YouTube. Anyone can upload videos captured on simple devices such as webcams and mobile phones or on high-end professional cameras.

Some stats on YouTube:

- Over 1.3 billion active users
- Over 60% of users are male
- 50% of users are between 25 and 44 years old
- 300 hours of video are uploaded every minute
- Every day, hundreds of millions of hours are spent watching YouTube
- 3.25 billion hours of content are watched each month
- More than half of YouTube views come from mobile devices
- The number of hours spent watching YouTube is up 60% from 2016 (FortuneLords, 2017).

16.5.2 Features

YouTube is simple to use. Unregistered users can watch most of the publicly available videos. However, logging in with your Google account, or following the simple registration on YouTube, provides additional benefits. Registered users can upload an unlimited number of clips, comment on and add video responses to videos and subscribe to content feeds that catch their attention and interest. Frequently enhanced functionality and clever features continually push YouTube to deliver bigger and better services to its ever-increasing user base.

YouTube allows individuals and businesses to own a channel on the site. They can brand and customise the channel as they like and manage the content that is created and shared. Viewers subscribe to various channels and get updates on new content. Vloggers, video bloggers, who create monthly, weekly or even daily posts, have become increasingly popular and some vloggers earn money and make a living through their YouTube programs.

16.5.3 Marketing and advertising on YouTube

There are two aspects to marketing through YouTube. The first is paid advertising by promoting video content next to, or during, other content on the site. The second is having a brand channel, which provides analytics and community features.

NOTE

The most watched video in YouTube history is the music video for Despacito performed by Luis Fonsi and featuring Daddy Yankee, which has netted over 3.3 billion views.

YouTube has a host of advertising options. YouTube's Promote Your Video feature and YouTube Fan Finder are just two of the many ways the site can be leveraged for promotion. Adverts can also be managed through Google AdWords. See more about this in the [Social media advertising](#) and [Video marketing](#) chapters.

Having a brand channel is perfect for content marketing. Content shared on your brand channel should not be too promotional, but should offer value to your viewers. Some promotion is expected and accepted by viewers, but if you want to entertain viewers and encourage them to subscribe and continue to tune in to view your content, it is necessary that the content offer value.

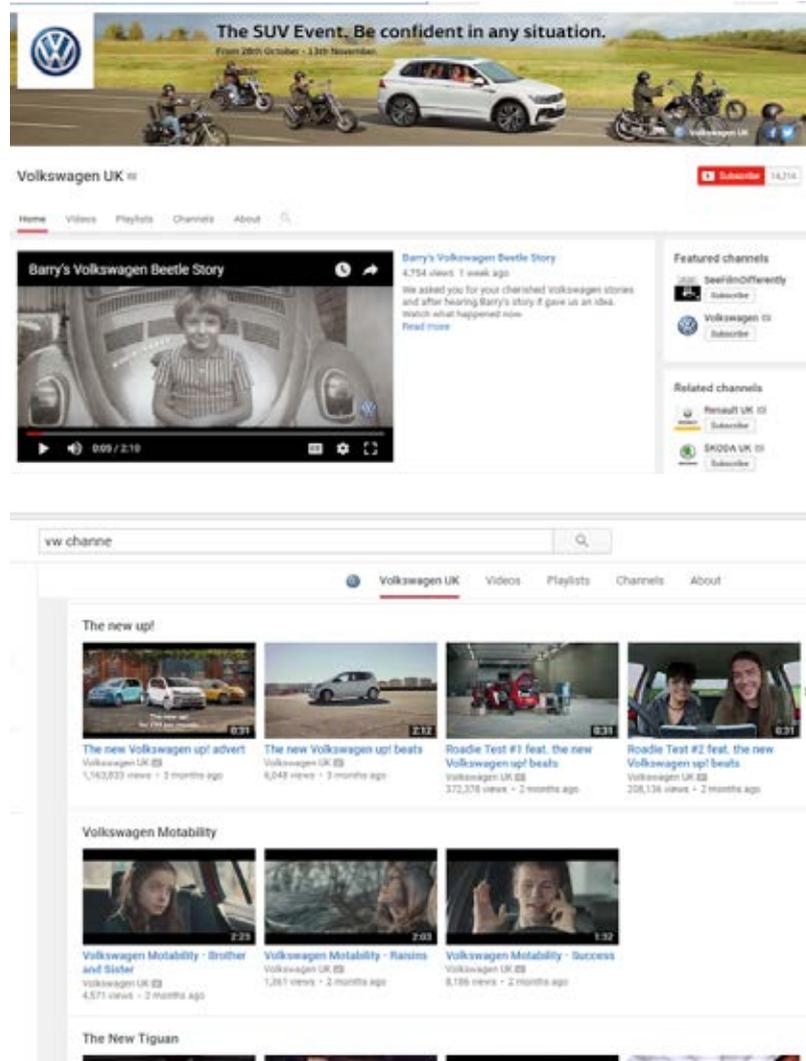


Figure 10. The VW brand channel on YouTube.

Using social platforms such as YouTube allows brands and video creators to tap into an existing community of avid video viewers. For example, YouTube has changed the way we view video commercials. Marketers have shown that if an advert is good enough, many users will choose to watch it. Super Bowl commercials, for example,

are highly anticipated each year and the best ones receive millions of online video views. These are users who have chosen to watch this advert at a media cost of zero! Other advertisers have realised that far longer adverts can be created and uploaded. As long as the content is good, users will watch and hopefully share. Time constraints online are not the same as they are for television networks.

Online video sharing also makes it possible for conferences to generate a far greater audience than ever before. The companies that run these conferences are able to engage with a massive audience by posting videos of the conference presentations, an excellent example of content marketing. TED (www.ted.com) and Nokia, which runs Nokia World, are excellent examples of organisations that increase interest by making their remarkable presentations available for free.

YouTube's Community tab

YouTube has created the Community tab, which allows viewers to respond to a creator's posts. It allows users to reply to messages with text to react and share their thoughts. Brands can make posts consisting of text, image, polls, or video and users can respond to these, making YouTube a far more social platform than before.

Read more about it here:

support.google.com/youtube/answer/7124175?hl=en&ref_topic=6059684

16.5.4 YouTube analytics

YouTube Analytics is available to all YouTube users for their videos and channels. Video views and popularity are broken up by geographical territory, as well as some demographic information. Discovery data shows how users got to your video.

One of the most useful reports for any video is audience attention. This report shows when users stop viewing a video, or rewind sections of video and compares this to videos of a similar kind.

16.5.5 YouTube summary

YouTube offers brands and businesses a great platform to share content with their customers. Being able to personalise and brand your own YouTube channel helps to develop your brand's online presence and assists with SEO. Your own brand channel means having an online collection of all your video content that users can peruse in their own time. And through analytics, you can observe what types of content resonate more with your users. You can optimise your efforts by sharing popular content on other platforms or even paying for promotion of popular content to get further reach and awareness.

16.6 Instagram



Figure 11. Instagram logo.

NOTE

Refer to the [Video marketing](#) chapter for more information on marketing on YouTube.

16.6.1 Introduction and stats

Instagram (instagram.com) is a mobile-based photo app that allows you to take a picture with your phone camera and then add an interesting artistic filter to make it look polished and beautiful. This can then be shared on Instagram itself and on other social networks for followers to view and comment on.

People love to share photos, images, art and funny pictures online. Images tend to attract higher engagement than text-only posts.



Figure 12. Instagram sign in.

Some statistics on Instagram as of 2016:

- 700 million monthly users
- 400 million daily active users
- 32% of people online use Instagram
- Over 40 billion photos shared.
- 59% of internet users between 18 and 29 use Instagram, compared to only 33% of internet users aged between 30 and 49 years.

(Omnicores, 2017a)

16.6.2 Features

Users have a profile and a unique username. On their profile, users post images or videos. They can include hashtags and tag other users who may appear in the image or video or who they think the post would particularly appeal to and who might wish to engage with it. Instagram also provides for direct posts, which are posts sent directly to up to 15 specific users. This is a useful feature for businesses to engage with key influencers, who may in turn share the post with all their followers.

Users follow other users or brand pages that they find interesting. Posts can be liked, by double tapping the picture or tapping the heart icon and commented on. Each user has an activity feed which provides the recent activity of the users they follow, as well as how people have engaged with what they have posted (Kirschner, 2015).

Instagram also offers Shopping on Instagram. Users will be able to tap on item to find a larger image, a description of the product and how much the product costs.

NOTE

Hashtags are key means of tracking relevant subjects, categories and trends. As on Twitter, hashtags help users find and give context to your post. For example, your post about a dog could have the hashtag #DogsOfInstagram or #dogstagram.

There will also be a link that takes users directly to the website where they can purchase that specific product. (Facebook, 2017b).

16.6.3 Marketing and advertising with Instagram

With over 400 million daily users, Instagram is one of the world's largest mobile social media platforms. Its benefit lies in boosting brand relevance through eye-catching visual content and potential large audiences. Business pages and posts cost nothing to set up, but like other social media platforms, Instagram is becoming a pay to play space. Brands need to use promoted posts to reach a more extensive audience than they would with simple organic reach. Brands can promote posts without a business page, but do not have access to analytics and data about their users and their engagement with posts and ads.

The large number of potential followers and the analytics data provided for business accounts provides marketers with key information about potential customers. To benefit from Instagram's analytics tool, Follower Insights, brands need a business profile, which can automatically be linked to their Facebook Page. Their contact information will be imported directly and any Instagram followers will be able to contact the brand through Instagram. Because Instagram is owned by Facebook, it integrates with Facebook's advertising interface, making advertising across these channels seamless.

NOTE

You can watch a video on how shopping on Instagram works here: vimeo.com/209655799.

NOTE

Read more about this in the **Social media advertising** chapter.

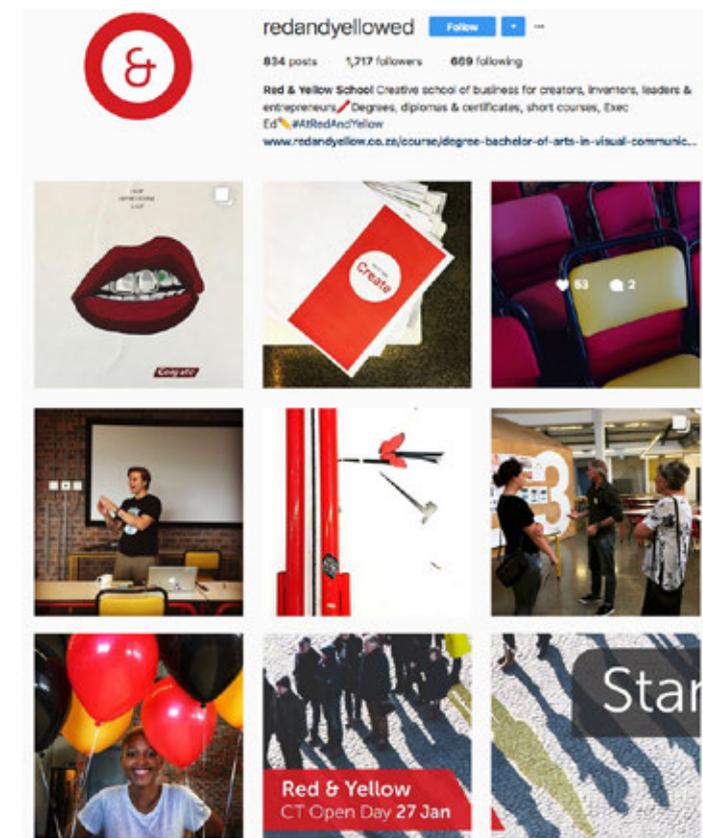


Figure 13. Red & Yellow use colourful and brand relevant imagery on their Instagram page.

NOTE

For more details on marketing with Instagram, see goo.gl/pyd1iu

NOTE

For more information on the features of Instagram, see sproutsocial.com/insights/instagram-features

Brands need to ensure they connect with the right communities so that they reach the right followers, but also need to monitor competitors and their posts and followers. Brands should use hashtags in every post, preferably those that are popular and actually used by their audience. Hashtags enable tracking of mentions and shares and tends to make content discoverable. Rare hashtags can make content less easy for potential customers or users to find. But, only using popular hashtags means your content could get lost among a million other posts. A more unique hashtag, marketed and publicised well, can make your content easier to find. For example, #food renders millions of results, while #vegan will narrow these results. Hashtags are also good for SEO. Understanding your audience is crucial as a brand and monitoring their engagement is necessary to ensure that your posts are relevant.

Business profiles can promote posts directly and can specify the business objective and call to action. Budgets and time periods for the promotion can also be tailored to the brand.

16.6.4 Instagram Analytics

If you are using Instagram for business, then you will have access to Instagram Insights. Instagram insights tracks followers and what they like. Information on posts such how many followers saw a specific post and how many engagements and views it received as well as total number of followers can all be tracked. Follower activity is also monitored, with insights into demographic details, competitor posts they have engaged with, time of day they are most likely to engage and what trends your followers are following. Individual promoted posts can also be tracked.

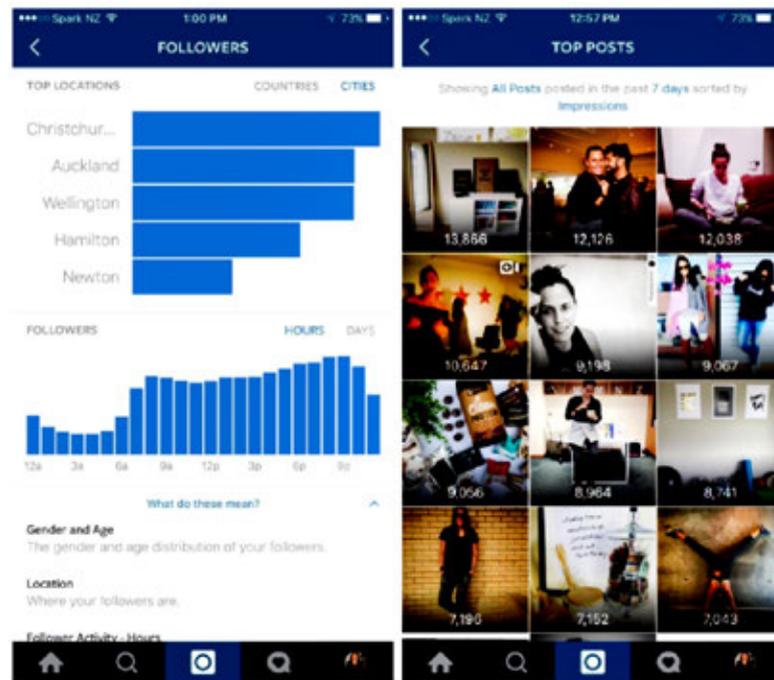


Figure 14. Instagram Insights.

Marketers can use this information to improve their posts, increase engagement by planning a strategy that will ensure posts occur at optimal times and include correct hashtags.

16.6.5 Instagram summary

Instagram is a great platform for brands that have a strong visual identity, or who are able to tap into this visual audience with beautiful and eye-catching content. Instagram can be managed through Facebook's Ad manager, meaning you can manage ads and promotions seamlessly across both platforms from one place.

Instagram is constantly updating its features, integrating Snapchat-like features, such as Stories and filters and providing a pin-board-type feature for brands to collect and showcase their content and products. With the addition of Shopping on Instagram, there are new exciting eCommerce opportunities for retail based brands. Instagram is a popular mobile platform and should be considered by any brand that wishes to engage with a mobile, millennial audience.

16.7 Twitter



Figure 15. Twitter logo.

16.7.1 Introduction and stats

Twitter is the most popular microblogging service. Microblogging is a form of blogging that allows a user to publish short text updates, previously limited to 140 characters, but increased in 2017 to 280 characters which can be viewed by anyone or restricted to a specific community. Twitter (www.twitter.com) was launched in July 2006. These 280-character posts, called tweets, are usually short thoughts or links to interesting articles.

Twitter boasts over 328 million monthly active users, with 100 million of those active daily sharing over 500 million tweets every day. Twitter was thought to be a platform for older users, but latest stats show that nearly 40% of users are between 18 and 29 years old, compared to around 30% of users being between 30 and 49 years old. Twitter is definitely a platform that users access on the go, with over 80% of Twitter users accessing the site from their mobile phone (Omnicores, 2017b)

16.7.2 Features

Each user on Twitter will have a unique username denoted with @ and their chosen name, for example, @robstokes for www.twitter.com/robstokes. Tweets can be directed to a specific user simply by typing their @username at the start of the tweet. This is also known as their twitter handle.

Like Instagram, Twitter users use hashtags to categorise their posts by adding a word or phrase prefaced with the # symbol for example, #DigitalMarketing. The hashtag will become a link that you can click to see other tweets that share this

NOTE

Twitter trialed using 280 characters in 2017. You can find out more here: www.nytimes.com/2017/09/26/technology/twitter-280-characters.html

NOTE

The hashtag was first used in 2007 so that users could track the online communications and discussions about a specific event, Barcamp. The #barcamp is thus the first use of the hashtag in social media.

tag. Users can also choose to follow a hashtag, meaning that they will see all public messages with that tag, whether they follow the user who posted it or not. This can be a very useful way of collating information at events such as conferences. If you're not at the event, you can still follow messages from the event by following the hashtag. For those at the event, all tagged messages can be broadcast in a shared location.

If a hashtag or keyword is used very frequently in a short time, it can become a trending topic and is displayed to the left of a user's tweet stream. Events of global interest usually feature heavily, but sometimes brands can trend too (although not always for the right reasons). If a tweet is considered noteworthy, it can be retweeted or quote retweeted. Retweeting means reposting somebody else's tweet to your own profile, along with their username. Twitter automatically displays this as a retweet. A quote retweet allows you to retweet another post and include a comment about the tweet as well.



Figure 16. An example of the new 'quote tweet' feature on Twitter that allows you to include a comment about the post you are retweeting.

16.7.3 Marketing and advertising with Twitter

Twitter has become a popular and important marketing tool for many organisations, brands and individuals. Many brands use it successfully for rapid customer service, for example, @jetblue @klm and @dstvcare.

Twitter has become a great market research and consumer insights tool. The ability to search for brand keywords on Twitter and track indirect conversations, offers huge insight to brands.

Its immediacy allows for news to be broadcast to dedicated followers and fans first, as pop star Lady Gaga has done with single releases (@ladygaga). Dell lists several Twitter channels (www.dell.com/twitter), many of which exclusively release offer information (@delloutlet).

Twitter has a series of self-service advertising options, which are covered in detail in the chapter on **Online advertising**. These include Promoted Tweets, Promoted Accounts and Promoted Trends.

16.7.4 Twitter Analytics

Currently, Twitter Analytics is available to all users, even those with personal accounts. Hootsuite's Twitter management tools have built in analytics (hootsuite.com/) that can provide insightful data. Important metrics for Twitter include how many users interact with your content by clicking through on links, how many reply to you, how many retweets you receive, as well as hashtags and trends.

16.7.5 Twitter summary

Twitter remains a powerful conversational platform for brands. It facilitates two-way communication with users and provides great reach and awareness through possible retweets. The analytics are good and the hashtags enable great tracking of sentiment about your brand, products and events. The increasing number of ad options is also a great plus for marketers.

16.8 Snapchat

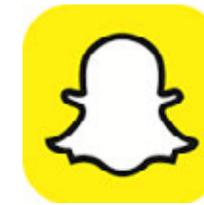


Figure 17. The Snapchat logo.

16.8.1 Introduction and stats

Snapchat was launched in 2011. It is a mobile messaging service that sends photos, videos, texts and drawings, but the message only lasts for ten seconds and then disappears. Snapchat is free to download and free to send messages.

Snapchat has proven extremely popular with teenage audiences, who seem to enjoy the ephemeral nature of the app. 71% of Snapchat users are under 25, though this is changing rapidly and 28% of US teens consider it the most important social network. Around 35% of users admitted to using the app because the content disappears.

In 2017, there were 166 million daily active users, with 60% contributing content daily. Over 9 000 snaps are shared per second, averaging out to 400 million a day and the platform receives 10 billion daily video views. The average user spends 30 minutes a day on the app.

Snapchat has seen exponential revenue growth. In 2014 its revenue was US \$3 million; this grew to US \$50 million in 2015, US \$404 million in 2016 and a whopping projected US \$1 billion for 2017 (Techcrunch, 2017). However, it has been losing traction since early 2018 after a tweet from Kylie Jenner.

16.8.2 Features

Users have a profile and use the app to share Snaps. A Snap is an image that the user can modify with filters or the drawing tool. A filter can denote the outside temperature, your speed, time, location and more. The Draw tool allows users to draw over the photo or video, with a full colour spectrum and Type allows them to annotate and add personalised text. Users can also add Geofilters and sponsored lenses to the photos, both of which have proven strong marketing tactics for brands.



Figure 18. Cadbury Sponsored Lenses on Snapchat.

Another popular Snapchat feature is Snapchat stories. These stories are groups of images or videos, put together as a kind of mini-movie, that is available for a user's followers to view for 24 hours (Webwise, 2016).

16.8.3 Marketing and advertising on Snapchat

Snapchat can be used for sharing various content with your audience. This can either be value added content, in the form of how to's, latest industry material and relevant tips; or it can be storytelling content, taking your audience behind the scenes of your business or showcasing aspects of your company culture and values and providing a glimpse into the brand. Geofilters and sponsored lenses are also great ways to get your audience to engage with the brand on the platform. Brands pay a daily rate, sometimes as much as US \$750 000 a day, to provide branded filters and lenses for users to play with and share.

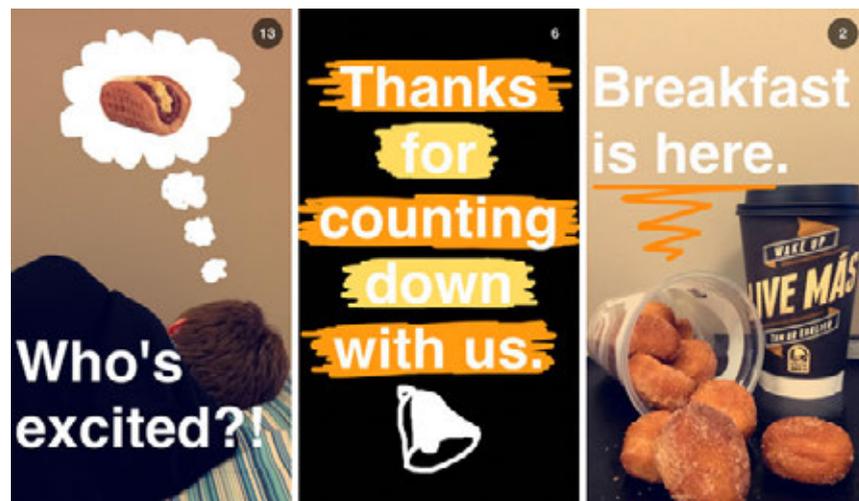


Figure 19. Taco Bell using Snapchat for the launch for its new breakfast offering.

16.8.4 Snapchat Analytics

Just like any other platform, it is necessary to monitor your performance on Snapchat and to continuously improve and optimise your content to drive a larger audience. Snapchat analytics provides information on the number of total story completions, unique views and screenshots. Seeing which type of content your users prefer means you can really optimise your efforts.

16.8.5 Snapchat Summary

Snapchat is proving to be a powerful marketing tool, albeit an expensive one. Paid marketing efforts on the platform are mostly limited to big brands that can afford the high rates and the development costs to create engaging and interactive filters. However, smaller independent brands can still make good use of the platform to share behind-the-scenes information, build up to events and build a loyal following, especially if your target market is more youth orientated.

16.9 LinkedIn



Figure 20. The LinkedIn logo.

16.9.1 Introduction and stats

LinkedIn is a professional social network. It has 433 million members in 200 countries around the world. More importantly, one in three professionals in the world has a LinkedIn account and almost 50% of key decision makers use LinkedIn for business purposes. LinkedIn is also 277% more effective for lead generation than Facebook or Twitter (PerfectBoom, 2016).

To access all the benefits of LinkedIn, you need to have a company presence. LinkedIn is used for building networks, improving credibility and driving recruitment. LinkedIn can:

- Help your business to engage and connect with influential industry figures
- Boost search engine page rank
- Provide a host of data for market research
- Allow businesses to monitor prospects and customers
- Enable businesses to clarify what they stand for
- Track and learn more about the media covering your industry
- Assist in positioning your business as an industry thought leader
- Engage customers with LinkedIn hosted content.

(Karr, D. 2015)

16.9.2 Features

Company page

A company page helps LinkedIn members learn about your business, your brand and any job opportunities in your company. A company page is a great starting point for developing a reputation as a leader or player in your industry.

Initially, company pages were viewed as HR landing pages, but they have evolved. They can help drive business results, increase awareness about your business and its products and services and promote career opportunities. Your LinkedIn company page should be viewed as a supplement to your company website and should help to drive traffic to your website. These pages provide free marketing opportunities and can enhance the credibility of your company. Good copy on your page should incorporate your key phrases and key words to ensure your site is optimised for search engines.

Some key tips for a great company page include:

1. Highlight your business entities with a showcase page
2. Share engaging content regularly
3. Optimise for search engines using keywords
4. Target prospective candidates with a Careers tab
5. Use an eye-catching cover image to grab user attention (Edgecomb, 2016).

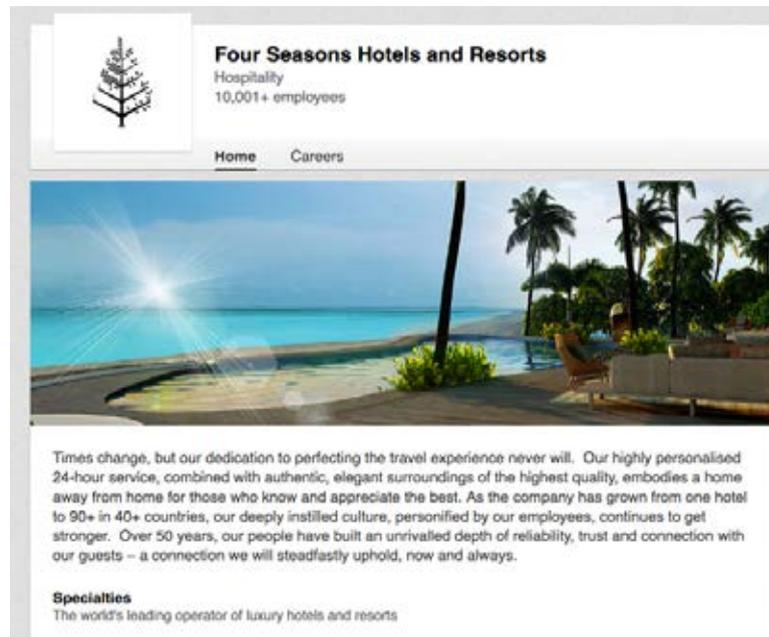


Figure 21. The Four Seasons Hotel's company page on LinkedIn uses a great image and focuses on their achievements and their people rather than pushing the hotel.

NOTE

For more information on creating a quality company page see the following link: goo.gl/s6eUS3

Showcase pages

LinkedIn also has Showcase pages, which provide a way for companies to highlight their individual brands, specific products, or new initiatives. Showcase pages are an extension of Company pages. A dedicated page helps drive engagement and allows businesses to share specific content with a targeted audience. LinkedIn users can now follow only the aspects of your business they are interested in. Showcase pages are designed to build relationships with relevant LinkedIn members and LinkedIn suggests using Sponsored Content and Sponsored InMail for more campaign-based marketing efforts.

LinkedIn Groups

LinkedIn Groups allows for your company to join with other professionals and businesses outside of your immediate circle of contacts. It broadens exposure and connects your business with others in your industry. It provides a platform for you to share industry expertise and establish your business as a thought leader. Participating in Group discussions also potentially attracts visitors to your company page.

Groups help extend the reach of your content and provide constructive feedback from relevant professionals. Groups share information about target audiences and provide market researchers with insights. It is important to join Groups that are relevant to your business and interests. Sharing company content on a Group increases traffic to your page and your website. To avoid being seen as overly promotional in Groups and only pushing your own agenda, engage in a courteous manner and share, comment and use the opportunity to create meaningful relationships.

Job postings

LinkedIn is often the first place top talent look for work, so it's important that your job vacancies are displayed and kept updated. It is also useful for HR to recruit new talent by looking at potential candidates using LinkedIn and asking them to apply for specific positions.

Advanced People search

The Advanced People search enables your business to network by seeing who your contacts know and in turn connect with them directly. The power of LinkedIn lies in its ability to make new connections and relationships through existing ones and using such opportunities to expand the business. Current stats say that 50% of B2B buyers use LinkedIn as a resource to inform purchasing decisions, while 76% of B2B buyers use recommendations from their professional networks for whom they wish to work with (Newberry, 2016).

LinkedIn Pulse

LinkedIn Pulse is a blog platform. Brands are not able to use it themselves, but by working with influencers, the platform can be leveraged for marketing.

16.9.3 Marketing and advertising on LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a great marketing tool in terms of generating awareness, understanding your target audience, making connections and building relationships. It also offers a range of advertising solutions. These include:

- Sponsored content – boosting your content
- Sponsored InMail – deliver relevant content directly to your potential customer's LinkedIn mail boxes
- Text Ads – self-service advertising platform offering high quality leads within tight budgets. (LinkedIn, 2016).

16.9.4 LinkedIn Analytics

LinkedIn has its own native analytics service which provides a good amount of information on audience and engagement. It provides useful data on updates, reach and engagement.

'Updates' is a table showing the most recent updates, including:

- Previews of posts
- The date posted
- The audience the post was sent to
- Whether the content was sponsored or not
- The number of impressions to LinkedIn members
- The number of clicks your content received
- The number of interactions (likes, comments or shares)
- Any additional followers who were acquired due to the post
- Total engagement.

Additional graphs showing the reach of the post include the trend on the number of times updates were seen organically and through paid channels. Engagement is also illustrated on a graph to demonstrate engagement across organic and sponsored campaigns for various time lines (White, 2016b).

Other companies, like Quintly (www.quintly.com/linkedin-analytics) and simply measured (simplymeasured.com/linkedin-analytics) also offer detailed analysis of LinkedIn pages and their performance for your business.

16.9.5 LinkedIn Summary

For B2B marketing, LinkedIn is definitely the platform of choice. The unique targeting and search functionalities of the platform make it well suited to such marketing efforts. It also provides a lot of unique options for B2C marketers and can be leveraged nicely for professional contacts and to gain acclaim within your industry.

NOTE

For more information on advertising on LinkedIn see business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/how-to-advertise-on-linkedin and the **Social media advertising** chapter.

16.10 Pinterest



Figure 22. The Pinterest logo.

16.10.1 Introduction and stats

Pinterest started in 2010. It is classified as a visual bookmarking site, where users can 'pin', categorise and share images and ideas they find online. Despite being pitched as a catalogue of ideas rather than a social networking platform, the site is considered one of the most popular social media websites with over 100 million active monthly users (Rouse and Wigmore, 2016).

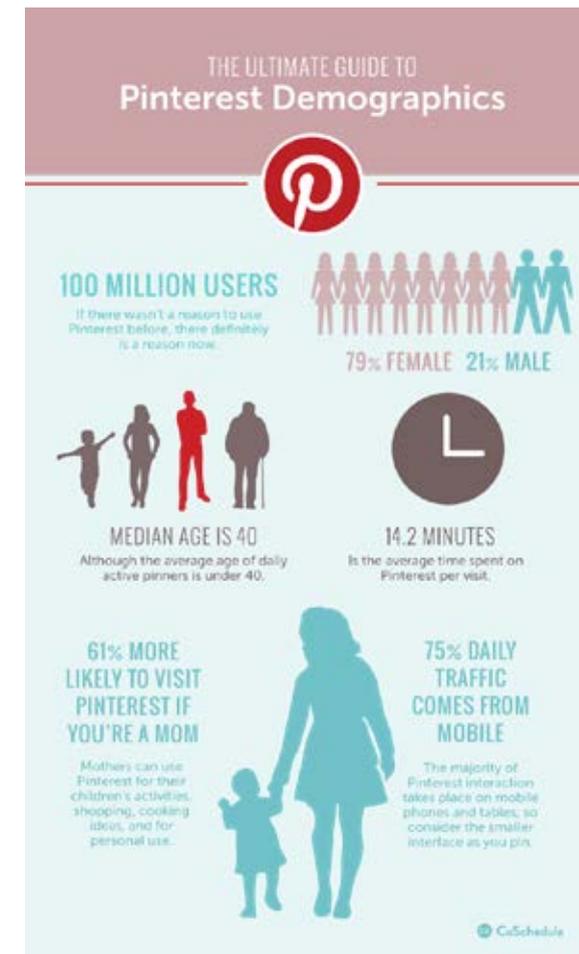


Figure 23. Pinterest demographics.

16.10.2 Features

Each pin is an idea. This could be a recipe, an image, an article, or a quote. Each pin links back to its original site. By including the Save button (or Pin It) button to your site, you make it easier for users to pin your content onto their boards in Pinterest.

Pinterest's main feature is the board. You create 'boards' on your profile by posting content or pinning content you find online. You can also repin content from other users' boards. Boards need to be designed and crafted around themes and each board should be uniquely named. Users can follow a board or a profile. Boards are classified under subject categories, which help users find what they are interested in.

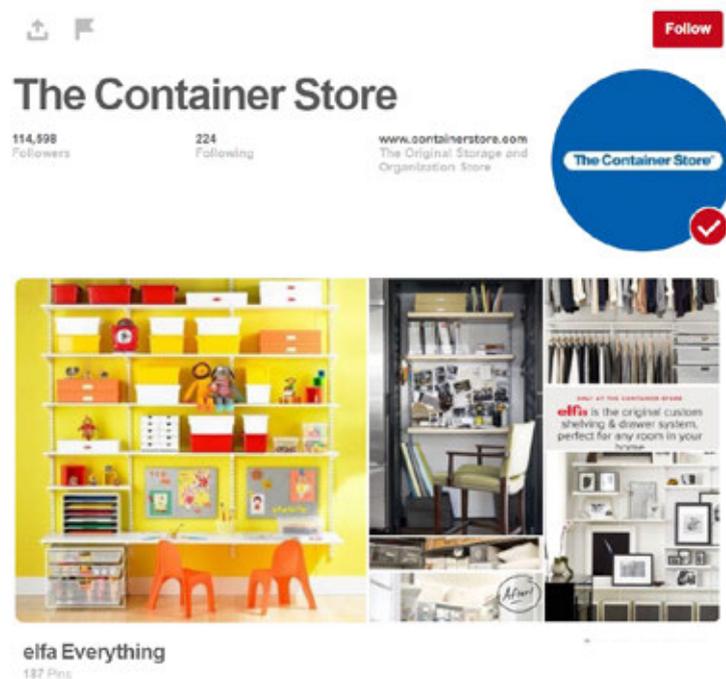


Figure 24. An example of a good Pinterest board.

You can now shop directly on Pinterest from a selected group of retail partners within the US. This will be extended to other retailers. Users browse pins as normal and when viewing a buyable pin an "Add to bag" button will appear. The "Add to bag" button links back to the merchant's store, enabling the user to purchase on Pinterest, with all necessary order details and payment information sent directly to the merchant for processing. To find out more about buying products on Pinterest, visit help.pinterest.com/en/articles/selling-on-pinterest.

16.10.3 Marketing and advertising on Pinterest

As a business, you can create your own business page. This includes a host of tools, such as:

- Analytics
- Direct links back to your website

- Easier pinning of your website content via the save button
- Newsletters
- Buyable pins
- Options for promoting material
- Even widget builders.

Business profiles should not only be providing boards of their products. Boards should include the lifestyle or essence behind the brand. A makeup brand, for example, could also include boards on high fashion, new trends in makeup, interesting use of makeup in movies and even general skin care.

Rich Pins allow businesses to add extra details to their Pins, such as the ability to:

- Directly install an app
- Include location and contact information
- Connect to articles
- Link to product information and purchase details
- Include recipes
- Show ratings and reviews for the latest movies.

Promoted pins are pins that the business pays for to reach more people. They're native ad units that help users discover and save your ideas. Promoted pins work for awareness, engagement and directing traffic to your website. Pinterest has also introduced buyable pins, which allow users to buy your products directly through Pinterest.

16.10.4 Pinterest Analytics

Pinterest Analytics is the native analytics tool built into the site. It is available automatically to business account holders. It provides information on some important metrics, including:

- The most repinned items on your boards
- Various metrics about your audience, including their interests and the types of things they want to repin
- Impressions and viewers.

It gives information about what is working and not working on your boards, which can be adjusted accordingly. This should inform strategy and board design going forward (Pinterest, 2016).

16.10.5 Pinterest summary

The visual nature of Pinterest and the ability to use boards as collections make the platform a good choice for retail brands. Brands that target women are likely to do well on the platform due to its strong female demographic. Marketers who have used Pinterest comment on its higher than average conversion rate, with some attributing it to the fact that users of the platform are further along in the buying cycle. Pinterest is gaining in popularity as a social media space for marketing and should not be written off when considering platforms.

NOTE

To see more about using Pinterest for marketing and advertising, see business.pinterest.com/en/tools and goo.gl/yVwRD8 as well as the [Social media advertising](#) chapter.

16.11 Other social media options

16.11.1 Blogging

A blog is a website where entries (blog posts) are typically displayed in reverse chronological order. Blogbasics (2017), defines a blog as a “frequently updated online personal journal or diary”. Blogs usually allow readers to comment on blog posts. A typical blog will feature text, images and links to other related blogs and websites.

Blogs for marketing can help you:

- Create an online identity
- Create a voice for yourself or your company
- Promote engagement with your audience
- Build a community.

Blogs can be very successful marketing tools. They’re an excellent way to communicate with staff, investors, industry members, journalists and prospective customers. Blogging also helps to foster a community around a brand and provides an opportunity to garner immediate feedback on developments.

Corporate blog content should be:

- Industry relevant
- Appealing to your target market
- Transparent and honest
- Personal and entertaining
- Related to what’s going on in the blogosphere
- Posted regularly.

Search engines value regular, fresh content and blogging can create just that. The more you post, the more often search engines will crawl your site looking for additional, relevant content. Basing your blog on the keyword strategy created during the SEO process can also ensure that your website ranks highly for key phrases. Blogs, by their social nature, can also increase the incoming links to your website.

Using a blog platform that is designed to be search engine-friendly is crucial to harnessing the SEO power of blogging. Some features of SEO-friendly blogging platforms:

- Each blog post should be assigned a unique page that can easily be accessed and indexed by the search engines (this is called a permalink).
- It should be possible to tag pages with keywords relevant to your SEO strategy.
- Each post should be able to have its own unique metadata (title, description and key phrases).
- Social sharing and bookmarking functionality should be built in.

Promoting your blog

List the blog in blog directories. While they’re not as popular as search engines, many Internet users visit them when looking for information. Examples include Blogarama (www.blogarama.com) and BlogCatalog (www.blogcatalog.com).

Blogs are powerful because of their reach, their archives and the trust that other consumers place in them. For a marketer, they present opportunities to learn how others perceive your brand and to engage with the audience. Some brands get this right; some get it wrong. Blogs can provide a snapshot of audience sentiment regarding a brand. Marketers can also listen to blog activity around competitors to gain market insights.

Blogging platforms that can be used to set up a blog quickly and easily include:

- WordPress (www.wordpress.com)
- Tumblr (www.tumblr.com)
- Blogger (www.blogger.com)
- Medium (medium.com).

16.11.2 Podcasts

A podcast is a digital radio or video programme downloadable from the Internet. It is possible to subscribe to a podcast as one would to a blog. You can listen to a whole range of programmes and voices; just as blogs have allowed users to become writers without having to deal with a media channel controlled by someone else, podcasting has allowed anyone who fancies doing so to become a broadcaster. Many traditional radio shows are now also available in podcast format. Many liken the shift from traditional radio to podcasts to that of traditional TV channels to on demand online services, but at a much faster pace. Users see podcasts as the “Netflix for radio” (Main, 2016).

‘Podcatching’ software allows you to download the latest edition of any podcast you subscribe to automatically. Most people use iTunes, go to www.apple.com/itunes/store for loads more information on podcasting and a huge list of available podcasts. You can listen on your computer or transfer the file to an iPod or MP3 player. Podcasts are usually free and the most successful ones have very high-quality content and production value.

Podcasts are usually recorded and edited using home equipment and are done for the love of it. Specialised podcasting software is available, such as Apple’s Garage Band or QuickTime Pro. These packages make it quite simple to record, mix and format the audio files correctly. Just like bloggers, though, many podcasters are trying to figure out ways of making money from their podcasts and turn listeners into revenue.

21% of Americans have listened to a podcast in the last month, which is the same number of Americans that use Twitter. In addition, 75% of podcast listeners take action on a sponsored message, which creates a huge potential audience for your marketing messages (Main, 2016). Podcasts thus offer an incredible opportunity for marketers. The bottom line is that you now have a way of getting content to your target markets without having to persuade a media channel to carry it or to pay huge advertising rates.

NOTE

Cards Against Humanity used Medium in early 2017 to post about a ‘fake news’ press release after the Super Bowl. You can read more about this at: goo.gl/ydgV3E

NOTE

Tumblr is a part blogging, part microblogging tool and part social community. Each user has his or her own Tumblelog where they publish short text posts, images, quotes, links, video, audio and chats. Tumblr is perfect for users who don’t need a full blog and want to publish quick multimedia posts, usually from their mobile device. If you are interested in seeing how to use this platform see this article: [How to use Tumblr www.lifewire.com/how-to-use-tumblr-4049305](http://www.lifewire.com/how-to-use-tumblr-4049305)

Podcasts are:

- **Targetable:** You can create highly relevant, niche content and then promote it to a specific target market.
- **Measurable:** You can see exactly how many downloads and subscribers you have.
- **Controllable:** It's your content.
- **Responsive:** Set up a blog alongside your podcast and alter content according to the comments; you are actually having a conversation with your market.
- **Boundary free:** It's the Internet.
- **Relatively inexpensive:** The equipment, software and skills are readily and cheaply available and there are few or no distribution costs.

However, the content must be:

- **Excellent quality:** Like anything on the Internet, it is just as easy to unsubscribe as it is to subscribe. Quality content is what keeps listeners coming back.
- **Real and valuable:** While there is value in having product or service information embedded in a website, there is no point at all in producing an audio version of a company brochure as a regular podcast. Even if editorial is not actually paid for, a lot of the time it has been influenced in some way by advertisers. Although there are podcasts that carry adverts, users can fast forward straight past them and the chance of real success lies in branded content.

This is not about advertising or even just product information. It is about coming up with ideas for real programmes that, through informing or entertaining, enhance your customers' experience of your brand. Refer to the chapter on **Content marketing strategy** for more on creating non-promotional content that generates real value for customers.

It is also worth noting that brands do not need to make their own podcasts. A number of companies are advertising on other podcasts and doing well. In fact podcasts have become entry points for media consumers for plenty of brands. And with the audience growing rapidly, it is a strong channel that shouldn't be ignored (Main, 2016).

16.11.3 Bookmarking and aggregating

If there are websites you visit often, or that you would like to keep as a reference to come back to, it is easy to use your browser to 'bookmark' them. This means that you store the URL so that you can locate it again easily. It also gives you a personal library of websites that you can store on your computer.

Social bookmarking sites, however, allow you to store these links online, use tags to describe them and share these lists with other users. Some of these sites allow you to submit URLs that other users vote on, while others allow you to use the tags saved to browse through the lists and libraries that have been generated.

Websites that encourage users to submit content to bookmarking and aggregating sites use chiclets. These are buttons placed around the content that make it easier to submit and share the article. These services allow you to see what the community

of web users finds useful, interesting or humorous. You are able to find other users with similar interests to yours and explore the websites that they have found that you might not have come across yet.

Content submitted to a social bookmarking or aggregating site can dramatically increase traffic to a website and expose the site to many new views.

Seeing how users categorise your content will give you an idea of how your audience perceives your website and company. It may be remarkably different to how you think they see you. Look at other websites which are tagged similarly. You may find new competitors and possibly new ideas.

You can also use these services to share what URLs your company finds interesting. This can be a useful resource to add to an online press room, as well as a utility that fanatics of your company would get really excited about.

To generate links and traffic, investigate the sort of content for which your target audience loves voting and create that content. A word of warning: never do the content submission and voting yourself. It's one sure-fire way to incur the wrath of these communities. Organic growth is the only way to go here. It may take time as you build your reputation and value among the community, but the end result can be very worthwhile.

16.12 Analytics for social media

As with any digital marketing tactic, you need to be able to track and measure your campaigns to understand how successful they are and what you can do to improve them.

As we have shown, most platforms have native analytics, but because you do not actually host your presence, custom tracking is limited. Smaller businesses, in particular, rely on the built-in tracking offered by the various platforms, although new third-party tracking services are emerging and offering competitive and sophisticated tools, often for a fee. In some cases, it is also possible to integrate tracking to some extent if you are directing traffic to a web property that you own.

Web analytics software such as Google Analytics can also be used for social media tracking. On Facebook, a tracking script can be inserted in applications and tabs where content is served through an iFrame. When sharing links to your own site and content, campaign tracking parameters can be used to track the source of visits and report on them in your web analytics tool. Here is an example of a url with a tracking tag called a UTM code:

www.redandyellow.co.za/5-ways-design-can-used-empower-women/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=AugNewsletter

The campaign-tracking tag appended on the end of the URL:

?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=AugNewsletter

16.12.1 Click tracking with URL shorteners for social media

URL shorteners offer analytics that show how many users are clicking on links, when they are clicking and where in the world they are. When you share links on services like Twitter, you should be tracking this data. When selecting a URL

NOTE

The use of iFrames for tracking is decreasing, as they are not visible via mobile.

shortener, consider whether or not they keep the click analytics private. URL shortening services provide an easy way to share long links by generating a short URL that redirects to the original link. This is especially important when sharing links in messages with limited character counts.

There are several URL shortening services: bit.ly, goo.gl and ow.ly are three examples and some websites have their own bespoke services, such as nyti.ms for The New York Times, which is excellent for reinforcing brand recognition. Twitter also has their own bespoke service and no longer requires you to use one of the URL shortening service. Twitter will automatically alter the length of any URL provided in the tweet to 23 characters.

Using URL shorteners is very effective. For example, we may want to tweet a link to Red & Yellow's online Digital marketing course. The URL to a post may be www.redandyellow.co.za/courses/digital-marketing-course

That's 64 characters!

Using bitly, a URL shortening service, the link becomes bit.ly/1jpbs4e. It's now just 21 characters long and can be tracked.

Even better, some link shorteners allow you to customise your link, so the result could be bit.ly/R&YCourse, which is much easier to read and share, and more likely to be clicked on as it seems more trustworthy.

16.13 Selecting the appropriate platform

When choosing the most appropriate platform for your brand or business, you need to look at three key questions.

Who is your audience?

You need to define your target audience as much as possible and research them well. Find out as much about them as possible. Include their digital habits and typical online behaviours in your research.

How can you reach them?

Once you know who your target audience is, you can analyse the demographics and psychographics of the typical users of the different platforms and choose the platform your target audience uses and spends the most time on.

Facebook and YouTube are popular choices because of their large user base and thus potential reach. However, more niche platforms such as Pinterest or LinkedIn may be better choices as your content will appeal to and resonate more to these refined target audiences possibly resulting in more engagement than on one of the larger platforms.

What are your goals?

Certain platforms lend themselves to certain business and marketing goals. Do you just want awareness? Or do you want to build relationships and establish yourself as an industry expert? Are you looking for hard sales and traffic? Each platform will meet different objectives and it is important to choose one that is most appropriate to what you want to achieve.



Figure 25. Choosing the right social media platform.

As discussed earlier in the chapter, marketing on social media is no longer without costs. As more and more players enter the market, getting your content seen and noticed requires promoted posts, paid-for ads and targeted marketing. Even if having a channel, page or profile on a platform is free, creating content, especially videos, to put on the platform, costs money. It is important that the channel you post your content on provides the necessary return on investment.

With its large userbase and sophisticated targeting options Facebook provides the largest return on investment for most brands. With over 95% of brands sampled declaring a return from the platform. Snapchat with its expensive ads, smaller userbase and limited ad control makes it a less attractive option. Only 2% of brands sampled declared any type of return on investment from Snapchat. These means that most marketers are putting their money on Facebook to see a return on their investment (Socialfresh, 2016).

16.14 Rules of engagement

Social media implies a democratisation of information and requires authenticity and openness from those who deliberately use it for marketing. This means that good and bad stories spread easily and stay accessible. Jeff Jarvis had problems with Dell way back in 2005 and you can easily find all the relevant information about his ordeal with a quick Google search for 'Dell hell'.

Although you engage publicly with a wide audience when marketing online, marketers need to remember that they are communicating with individuals. While marketers should engage in the conversation and ideally lead it, they cannot control it.

16.14.1 Marketing to content creators

Content creators can have strong followings on social media and are thus regarded as online influencers.

Online influencers hold a lot of sway and should form part of any social media strategy. Supply such content creators with the tools and resources they need to talk easily about your product, including links to your social profiles, Twitter handles and hashtags.

16.14.2 Marketing to content consumers

Social media allow anyone to have a say and the same tools that are available to individuals are available to companies. Company blogs allow a brand to build an online personality and to interact with their target market. Entertainment created and spread via social media increases brand touchpoints. Using the same channels that are available to your consumer aids in understanding the consumer and levels the plane of conversation.

When using social media to reach out to content consumers, go to where your consumers are. The media you use is dictated by your users. For example, a nightclub for students can create a Facebook Page to advertise its weekly specials and interact with fans, while Land Rover enthusiasts may prefer to engage on a discussion forum.

With all interactions, marketing messages need to be clearly identified and labelled, with a disclaimer added if necessary. Trying to hide them as something else will only decrease your authenticity and probably your following.

16.14.3 Marketing to content sharers

Content sharers are content consumers who also pass your message on, whether it's by chat or email, by sharing a link on a blog or by submitting your content to a bookmarking or aggregating service. They are a crucial link in the chain that passes your message around. Make it as easy as possible to share your content by using social share buttons and unique and easy-to-read URLs.

16.14.4 Advertise on social media platforms

While marketers can use the tools of social media to convey their message, the characteristics that define a social media platform are also important. Social media allows users to express themselves and this means that rich demographic and psychographic information can be compiled for more useful and targeted advertising. This presents many opportunities for finding creative ways to reach an advert-fatigued demographic. It also introduces the risk of dealing with personal information so make sure you're up to speed with the relevant laws in your country.

16.15 Advantages and challenges

People are finding it easier to switch off or ignore traditional advertising, particularly through traditional media channels such as TV or radio. Social media gives brands the opportunity to interact with customers through relevant and targeted communications that customers can choose to engage with on their terms. For example, a consumer may visit a branded YouTube channel as opposed to deliberately ignoring advert breaks on television.

Social media's potential shareability can be one of its greatest benefits; if users like your content enough, they may share it with their own communities. This is increasingly rare and difficult to engineer.

Social media allows you to engage with an online community and connect your brand to the appropriate audience. Together these create an online community for your brand and its supporters. Social media has created a forum for brand evangelists.

The numerous interactions on social, allow you to garner feedback from your communities. Such feedback helps drive future business insights and innovation, as well as marketing strategies. You can learn more about your audience's likes, dislikes, behaviours and needs.

However, companies need also be aware that bad or false messages spread as quickly as good ones. The connectedness that can prove so useful can also be a conduit for negative messages and brand attacks.

Social media facilitates a two-way conversation between customer and company. This necessitates that the company shifts approach from 'deploy and watch' to one of constant involvement with the audience.

This evolving landscape is one in which the customer really is king and any attempt to dethrone the king can have dire consequences. Efforts to control the conversation in social media are soon found out and can backfire horribly. Any company embarking on a social media strategy needs to be sure to monitor their reputation online regularly. It is crucial to know what is being said about your brand online and to respond timeously when communicating in the social media sphere.

Finally, never forget that special rules and laws apply when you are dealing with personal information provided by users so be very careful how and where you use this data.

16.16 Case Study: Harley-Davidson

16.16.1 One-line summary

Harley-Davidson Australia used Instagram to successfully reach a younger audience in the 18–35 year old millennial market.

16.16.2 The challenge

Harley-Davidson is an iconic American motorcycle brand. The brand has come to symbolise freedom and individuality, but is associated with an older market. The brand wanted to raise brand awareness and engage a younger audience.

16.16.3 The solution

Harley Davidson decided to use Instagram ads, for the first time, to reach 18–to 35-year old men in Australia and New Zealand.

Harley-Davidson used a series of illustrations to fit in with the visual nature of Instagram. They wanted to appeal to young, adventurous people who appreciate the world through a more visual lens. The brand identified three themes they felt resonated with their intended audience and tapped in to their own artistic heritage of seeing motorcycles as pieces of art. The brand commissioned local Australian artists to interpret these themes.

The illustrations were displayed as carousel ads for each theme. When swiped the images connected to form a storyline. The visual style was designed to mimic tattoo-like images and motifs that are popular in biking culture.



Figure 26. An example of the 2016 Harley-Davidson posts on Instagram.

16.16.4 The results

Over a run of just over two weeks, the ads reached almost 1.4 million men, aged between 18 and 35.

The ad drove over 8 000 clicks through to the brand's website.

Harley-Davidson achieved their objective of resonating with a younger audience and ultimately expanding their demographic (Digital Training Academy, 2016).

16.17 The bigger picture

A strong digital marketing strategy draws successfully on various tactics, leveraging these together. Social media can complement tactics as follows:

Social media is inextricably linked to content marketing strategy. Content is the foundation of any social media marketing endeavour, whether you're creating digital copy, images, videos or other media.

Social media can have SEO benefits. By using social media services, either to create or share content, websites can attract links and generate engagement, helping to enhance search engine rankings. Signing up to several social media channels can help a company own a larger chunk of the search engine results page. Companies can also use their SEO keyword strategy to focus their social media efforts.

Social media can provide a targeted network for online advertising. Detailed demographic information can play a large role in media planning and buying. Advertisers should create targeted interactive advertising for these mediums to encourage engagement. Social media

also provides affiliates with new avenues for targeted traffic, resulting in revenue growth for the company being marketed this way.

Social media plays a large role in online monitoring and reputation management, viral marketing and digital PR. Social media is used to express opinion and so is the bedrock of online reputation. Any company that wants to communicate to this connected audience needs to listen to social media. Social media is also key to finding and accessing your biggest brand advocates and influencers, who can be powerful allies in building your reputation.

All other marketing efforts should feed into building your online community. Social share buttons and referrals to your social media pages should be included in all other marketing materials. Social media should in turn try to convince users to sign up for newsletters or loyalty programs to get users to join your brand owned CRM. If the user is simply following you on the platform, their customer data lies on the third-party platform. Having their data in your own CRM allows you deeper access to that data so that you can engage with your customers through other mediums such as email and mobile.

16.18 Chapter summary

Social media refers to the creation and sharing of content by consumers on the Internet. It gives all Internet users, including brands and organisations, the opportunity to become both creators and consumers of content.

Social media refers to a collection of sites and platforms that include the following activities:

- Creating and engaging in social networks
- Creating and sharing content
- Using other Internet users' preferences to find content.

Most social media services are free to all users and rely on advertising for revenue. Social media provides targeted demographic information to advertisers looking to direct their advertising.

In this chapter we have discussed some of the main platforms, but there are many other smaller niche platforms, such as Tumblr, Vine, Spotify and SlideShare.

16.19 Case study questions

1. Why was Instagram an appropriate choice for Harley-Davidson?
2. Why do you think the brand decided on illustrations?
3. What other platforms would you have considered and why?
4. Are the themes the brand chose relevant to their target audience? Motivate your answer.

16.20 Chapter questions

1. Visit www.guardian.co.uk. List the ways in which this print publication is embracing social media.
2. Why is transparency so important to marketing using social media? Has this halted or accelerated the use of social media for marketing?
3. What is the difference between advertising using social media and marketing using social media? What are the benefits of social media to each and what are the challenges?

16.21 Further reading

www.mashable.com – a blog that covers social networking and social media.

www.socialmediaexaminer.com/ – an online magazine that publishes original research oversees multiple communities for social media marketers.

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