



Choose the right social media channels for you

Many businesses join social media because they feel they must. Social media has great benefits to the profile of your organisation, but you need to make sure you have the time and resource to manage it, have plenty of great content and most importantly, know where your audience are most active on social.

Each channel will have a different audience which you will need to consider if your business is on more than one platform. What will work for Facebook, won't work for Twitter, so you should be adapting your content for every platform you are on.

It is better to do one channel well, rather than multiple poorly managed channels, so here's an overview of each of the major platforms to help you make sure you are using the channels that are right for you.

Facebook

What is Facebook?

Facebook is the biggest social media platform with more than 2.2 billion users worldwide.

It can be likened to a family wedding. It is where people share personal stories, images and videos with their friends and family. They will only engage with organisations that are relevant to them or say something about them or someone they know.

What content works?

Visual content (images, videos or memes) that:

- evoke a personal reaction 'that's me', 'I feel that too'
- inspire 'you've got this', 'wow, that person is amazing'
- make you laugh 'us last night', 'that's you'
- educate and inform 'I did not know that', 'have you seen this amazing fact'

If you are using video, remember to keep it short and make sure the first 3-4 seconds suck you in.

As Facebook leans more towards personal engagements and prioritising content from friends and family, business pages need to work harder for comments and shares. Setting up a Facebook group through your page that encourages people to join and have conversations, is a great way to keep your brand in people's timelines.

When to post?

You will need to do a bit of trial and error to learn when your followers are most active, but generally, the best time to post on Facebook is 9am, 1pm, and 3pm and 12-1pm on the weekend. Avoid posting more than once a day.

Remember, you're only as good as your last post. On Facebook, if your content doesn't get your followers commenting and sharing, then next time you post it is less likely to appear in their newsfeeds, so you need to make sure content on Facebook is attention grabbing and makes your audience want to engage.

Twitter

What is Twitter?

Twitter is a news and social networking site where people communicate in short messages called tweets.

It is like a bustling city where everything is faced paced and constantly moving. It is the social media platform people use to keep up with everything that is happening in the world.

What content works?

A mix of content (blog links, news articles, images, polls) that:

- inform 'there's been a new development in social care', 'have you seen the news?'
- provokes questions 'what's the latest on?'
- incites opinions 'can you believe?', 'I completely agree'

Use relevant and popular hashtags to keep up with the trends and be part of the conversation.

People want to be heard on Twitter so respond to your followers and join in conversations on topics your organisation are interested in. The more active and responsive you are, the more people will engage with you and keep your brand in the newsfeed.

When to post?

Twitter is a live feed and once a post is put out, it will very quickly move down the timeline. Afternoons, between 12-3pm, or after 5pm, is recommended.

LinkedIn

What is LinkedIn?

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network designed specifically for the business community to connect professionals with other professionals.

It can be likened to a conference where people exchange business success and important industry information. This is the platform to share your messages with stakeholders, industry informers and potential employees, not members of the general public.

What content works?

Visual content (images, videos, links, blogs, case studies, thought leadership) that:

- showcase you brand vision and mission 'this is what we do', 'these are the people we help'
- thought-provoke, 'what do you think about this?' 'do you agree with this?'
- share insight 'here is what we think on this'

Posts can be longer and more formal and informative on LinkedIn but still be sure to capture the key info in the first 150 characters to entice people to read on.

Join groups and join in the conversation to improve your visibility and credibility.

When to post?

As this is a professional platform, commuting times are the best time to post i.e. 7-8am or 5-6pm.

Instagram

What is Instagram?

Instagram is for sharing images and videos. There are more than 600 million Instagram users worldwide. Just over 40% of users of Instagram users are under the age of 24.

It can be likened to a festival and it is where people go to feel good and explore new opportunities.

What content works?

Visual content (images, videos, quotes, behind the scenes) that:

- inspire positive thinking 'today's the day'
- stimulates imagination 'I really want to give that a go', 'I want to be more like that person'

Share other people's content if it is relevant to you – e.g. a stunning picture of where your organisation is based, or a picture of an event or product – just make sure to give the person credit.

Using popular or relevant hashtags and tagging your location in posts will increase your chances of coming up in people's searches.

Your images and videos need to be aspirational and aesthetically pleasing, which the built-in filters can help with.

Instagram stories – photos or videos that are only available to view for 24hours – are becoming more and more popular with businesses a quick way to get their messages across.

When to post?

People are less active on Instagram during work hours, suggested times to post are 8-9am, 1-2pm and after 5pm. But again, get to know you audience and when you get the most interaction.