

The Solopreneur's Guide to Social Media

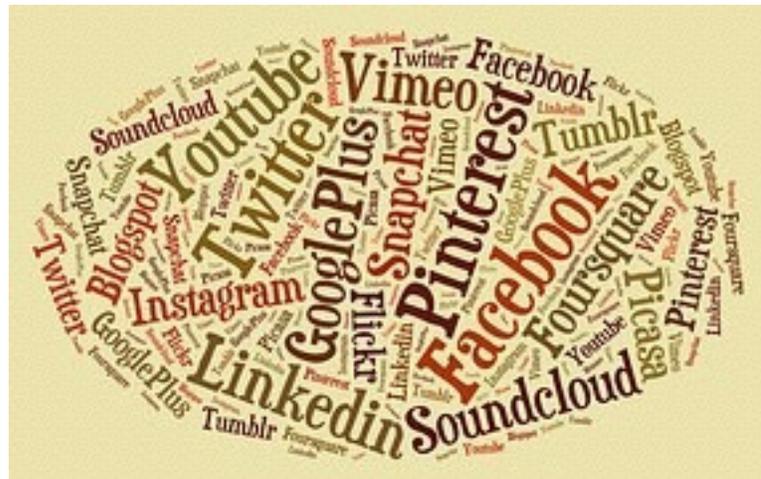


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Introduction

Social Media Marketing is still in its infancy, but is poised to have a major impact over the next few years. As the consumption of print media has decreased, the use of social media was increased. That means that the money spent to advertise in magazines and newspapers are now spent advertising on social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram. The great part about these popular social media platforms is that any business can set up an account at no cost. This levels the playing field in some instances, allowing you to reach a wider audience than you previously thought was possible or affordable.

Where Does Your Audience Hang Out?

Social Media options are plentiful and it can be overwhelming. As a result, many small business owners decide to avoid social media altogether. If they do take a stab at it, they do so sparingly. This tends to lead to lackluster results and a lack of motivation to give this social media stuff another try. So the one question that most small business owners have is, do I need to use all of these forms of social media? The answer to that is no. You are probably letting out a sigh of relief right about now. Your goal is to use the social media platform that fits your business model and your target audience.

Facebook

Facebook is the social media phenomenon that we all know and love. Out of all of the social media platforms, Facebook is the biggest with over 800 million members. The great thing about Facebook is that it allows you to interact with your customers using a variety of options. With Facebook analytics, you are able to target your audience more precisely than you can with print, radio or television advertising.

Business to Consumer

As the largest social network, Facebook is great for B2C interaction. Users tend to check their Facebook accounts several times a day via mobile device or computer. As Facebook continues to evolve, they are looking for more ways to connect your with consumers.

Fanpages and Groups

Facebook offers some great features for business owners. Fanpages by far are the most popular, but Facebook Groups have become popular for businesses as well. If you have a membership website, you can create a closed Facebook group as a forum for your members. Both options allow you to create a sense of community among your fans.

Variety

You can share links, photos, videos and written messages. This gives you several options when it comes to keeping your fans engaged. While photos and videos are very popular, valuable commentary is also appreciated.

Demographics

Gender	Mostly Female
Age	49 and under
Education	Some College
Income	\$49k and below

Youtube

Even if you do not have a Youtube account, surely you have watched a video on Youtube. With almost 500 million users, Youtube is another great marketing option for businesses. In addition to showcasing your products and services, you can also create tutorials and other knowledge based videos.

Video

While customers enjoy your finished products, there is a sense of curiosity about how things are made. Creating a video offers a behind the scenes look at your business. It is also a great way to share an experience that can't be captured in a photograph.

Performing

If your business requires you to 'perform', than you should be using video. It is one of the best forms of advertisement for you and your business. This gives potential customers an opportunity to see you in action before they hire you.

Informative

Even if you do not have a business that allows you to showcase your creative abilities, you can still benefit from video. One of the best ways is to do informative videos for your target audience. For example, if you are an accountant, you can offer tax tips. If you are a non-profit, you can offer a behind the scene look at how the donations are used.

Demographic

Gender	Men and Women
Age	18-34
Education	unknown
Income	unknown

Twitter

Twitter has taking the K.I.S.S.(Keep It Super Simple) philosophy to the next level and beyond. With a limit of 140 characters, you have no choice but to keep it short and sweet. The great thing about Twitter is that you can quickly share a message with your followers. While many of you may have tried using Twitter, it can be a bit overwhelming. The goal is to find the good balance between consumption and distribution.

Broadcasting

Twitter is often used for self promotion and that is to be expected. If you are having a sale or have a special announcement, Twitter is a great place to broadcast it. However, you do not want all of your tweets to be desperate sales pleas either. Be sure to mix it up. Share milestones, special recognitions and other business announcements as well.

Network

It is a great way to connect with people from all around the world. One of the best ways to grow your network is to participate in Twitter Chats. There are variety to choose from depending on the your industry. Many of the chats are hosted once a week and feature a special guest or topic. It is great way to learn from others within your industry and to expand your network.

Content Distribution

Twitter is also a great place to share original and curated content. This gives you a chance to share some information that your followers may find beneficial. Quotes tend to be very popular since they are a quick and easy read.

Demographic

Gender	Mostly men
Age	18-29
Education	Some Education/ College
Income	\$75k and up

LinkedIn

Just a few short years ago, LinkedIn was the place to go if you were an employee and looking to do some networking. Now the network has grown to encompass business to business networking opportunities as well. It is a great option to

Professional

When it comes to social media networks, LinkedIn is the suit and tie of the bunch. The content and commentary tend to be business oriented, therefore you are less likely to be distracted by unrelated content.

Branding

As a expert in your field, building your brand is an important part of your marketing strategy. LinkedIn offers you the opportunity to do this by sharing your content on their platform. While there is no guarantee that it will be widely seen, there is the the possibility for increased exposure. This becomes important because the people who are likely to read your content are also professionals.

Networking

LinkedIn is another great option for networking. Similar to Facebook, LinkedIn has groups that you can join. These groups are a great way to connect with other people within an industry or within an organization. By participating in these groups, you to stay abreast of the latest trends developing within your industry.

Demographic

Gender	Men and women
Age	35 and up
Education	College Degree or Higher
Income	\$75 and up

Google+

Google Plus is another great social network that has some great benefits. One of the biggest distinctions is the over all look of it. It is very interactive and visual images are an important aspect of the design. While it may not be as popular as some of the other social networks, it has a few similarities and some differences.

Networking

Similar to other social media platforms, Google+ allows you to follow others and join groups. However, instead of calling them groups, Google refers to them as communities. Just like the other platforms, you will find a wide variety of communities that you can join. Again this is a great way to network and interact with others in your industry.

Community

One of the unique features about Google+ is the ability to host a Google Hangout. It allows you to host a live video chat with a person or a group of people. This is a great option for both internal and external use. It a way to pull a group of people together for from various locations at one time. While conference calls are nice, you do not get a chance to see the person that you are speaking with. Google Hangouts is like a free version of video conferencing.

Webinars

Webinars have also increased in popularity during the past few years. In addition to being another form of video broadcasting, it is now used as a lead in to pitch your products and services. A lot of businesses are using it as a way to attract consumers, educate them about their products and hopefully close on a sale. Google Hangouts are often used to host webinars.

Demographic

Gender	Mostly Men
Age	18-34
Education	College Degree
Income	Unkown

Instagram

While Instagram is a new kid on the block, it has become extremely popular. What makes it unique is that the content is limited to photos and videos. While you will see words, they too are images. Instagram is a great marketing option for a business that offers a product or service that can be visually appealing.

Photographs

Think of Instagram as a running add campaign. Instead of purchasing spread in a magazine, you can post your photos to Instagram. You can also post a caption to accompany your photo if you want to share some additional information. Photos tend to garner a greater response than text and Instagram allows to capitalize on that.

Video

Instagram allows you to post 15 second videos to your account. While this may not seem like much, you will be surprised at how much content you can fit into 15 secs. This is very beneficial because it can be done from a mobile device with minimal steps. If you have a long video clip, you can select the snippet that you want to share with your audience. This is great for short message and mobile commercials.

Demographic

Gender	Men and women
Age	18-29
Education	Some college
Income	\$49 and below

Pinterest

Pinterest is like having a personal online catalog that consists of photos. The platform allows you post images with links back to your website. Your followers can then like, share or save the photo in a folder. This is beneficial because not every consumer is ready to buy at first glance. However, when they are ready, they know where to find you.

Photographs

“A picture is worth a thousand words.” Photos are probably the number one reason for using Pinterest. It is a great way to share a message with your audience that can be consumed quickly, shared or catalogued for later use.

Do It Yourself

Another popular use for Pinterest is to share how to advise or other helpful instructions. Did you know that a one gallon milk jug can be cut so that it can be used as a dust pan? Me neither, until I saw it on Pinterest. There are tons of great ideas shared by creatives across so many categories.

Infographics

These visual masterpieces have become very popular in recent years. If you or someone on your team has the skills to create infographics, Pinterest is definitely the place for them. People love them because the information is quick and easy to consume, all while being visually appealing. You can link the infographics back to your website to help increase traffic.

Demographic

Gender	Mostly women
Age	18-49
Education	College degree
Income	\$75 and up

Periscope

Periscope is the latest platform to take the world by storm. Periscope allows you to do live stream video using your mobile device. Viewers can comment or ask questions, which you can then address live. Similar to Instagram, your viewers can give you hearts if they like the content you are sharing. Hearts are something that you can accumulate per scope or over the lifetime of your profile. Once the live stream is over, the replay is available for 24 hours. Similar to other platforms, you want to attract followers and start following others. If your followers have notifications activated on their mobile device, they will receive an alert when you start your live stream. If they miss it, they can catch the replay while it is available.

Interactive

This is a great way to interaction with fans and potential customers. You can take them behind the scenes, discuss topics within your niche or just chat. Viewers love it because they can ask questions, offer feedback and meet new people at the same time.

Cross Promotion

If you have a product or an event that you would like to promote, Periscope is a good option for cross promotion. You can do demonstrations, offer special discounts and explain the benefits of what you have to offer.

Repurpose Videos

Don't let all of the time and effort you put into Periscope to go to waste. You can repurpose the videos and use them as a tool to market you business in other ways. You can post the videos to YouTube or use them to create a course.

Demographics for Periscope are not in yet, since this platform is about 6 months old at the time of this publication.

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